DEAD LETTERS

MAURICE BARING

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DEAD LETTERS

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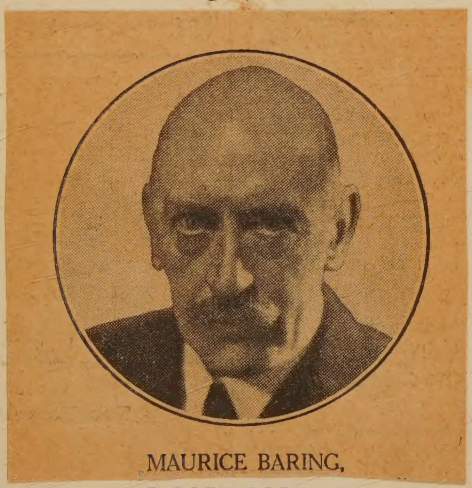
BY

MAURICE BARING



MAURICE BARING,

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DEDICATION

To Lord Lucas

My dear Bron,

I WISH to begin this bundle of "Dead Letters," collected from the Dead Letter Office of the World, with a living letter to you.

These letters are in no wise meant to be either historical documents or historical studies or aids to the understanding of history, or learning of any kind with or without tears. They are the fruits of imagination rather than of research. The word research is not even remotely applicable here, for in my case it means the hazy memories of a distant education indolently received, a few hurried references to Smith's "Classical Dictionary," a map of Rome which is in the London Library, and Bouillet's "Biographie Universelle." So that if you tell me that my account of the Carthaginian fleet is full of inaccuracies, or that the psychology of my Lesbia conflicts with the historical evidence,

I shall be constrained to answer that I do not care. Yet amidst this chaff of fancy there are a few grains of historical truth. By historical truth I mean the recorded impressions (they may be false, of course, and the persons who recorded them may have been liars, in which case it is historical falsehood) of men on events which were contemporary with them. One of the letters is entirely composed of such grains. I will not tell you which one it is until some of our common friends, who are historical experts, have singled it out as being the one letter which oversteps all bounds of historical possibility and probability. (It is not the letter on Heine, part of the substance of which was taken from Memoirs and freely blended with fiction.) Such singling out has already occurred with regard to certain details of the letters as they appeared week by week in the "Morning Post." But I confess that I have so far suffered more from the credulity than from the scepticism of my readers, and I was tempted at one moment rather to insert the impossible than to make the possible appear probable. For correspondents wrote to me, asking me to give them from my secret store further details

with regard to Lady Macbeth's housekeeping, Lord Bacon's business affairs, and the table talk of the Emperor Claudius.

On the other hand, a sceptic asked to be supplied with the historical evidence for Guinevere's extravagance in dress. I am conscious that in some of these letters I may have laid myself open to the charge of irreverence towards certain themes which are hallowed by romance and overshadowed by the wings of the great poets. I plead "Not guilty." I am sure that you, of all people, will acquit me; for those (such as you) whose enjoyment of the great poets is vital and whose belief in the permanence of Romance is robust are seldom offended at a levity which they have no difficulty in recognizing to be the familiarity, not breeding contempt but begotten of awe, of the True Believer, nor have they any difficulty in distinguishing such laughter from the scoff of the Infidel.

To end on a less pompous note, let me add that if you like this book that is enough for me; and the blame of the rest of the world, although it will ultimately affect my purse—and a purse, as Shakespeare says, is trash—will disturb neither my peace

of mind nor my digestion and will therefore not vex me.

On the other hand there is no amount of praise which a man and an author cannot endure with equanimity. Some authors can even stand flattery. I hope, therefore, to earn a certain measure both of your approval and others'; while theirs will be the more profitable, yours will be the more prized.

MAURICE BARING.

Sosnofka, Tambov, Russia.
October 19th, 1909.

"To most people of time past and present, at least history is a pageant, no less and no more. It is a vast procession of human lives, fascinating to us because of the likeness underlying all the differences and because of the differences through which we see the likeness."

J. W. Allen (*The Place of History in Education*).

"Il n'y a pas de lettres ennuyeuses."

The Man in the Iron Mask.

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DEAD LETTERS

FROM THE MYCENAE PAPERS

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

MYCENAE.

Honoured Sir,

I am sorry I was out when you came yesterday. I never thought that you seriously meant to come. I shall be very busy all next week, as Helen and Menelaus are arriving and I must get everything ready. Orestes was quite delighted with the cup and ball. You spoil him.

Yours sincerely,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

Most honoured Aegisthus,

One line to say that I have received your letter and *loved* it all except the last sentence. Please do

not say that kind of thing again as it will quite ruin our friendship, which I thought was going to be so *real*.

Yours very sincerely,
CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

Most honoured Aegisthus,

The flowers are beautiful, and it was kind of you to remember my birthday. But your letter is really too naughty. . . .

(The rest of this letter is missing)

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

MYCENAE.

Most honoured Sir,

This is to say that since you persist in misunderstanding me and refuse to listen to what I say, our correspondence must end. It is extraordinary to me that you should wish to debase what might have been so great and so wonderful.

Yours truly,
CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

MYCENAE.

Most honoured Aegisthus,

I was much touched by your letter and I will give you the one more trial you ask for so humbly and so touchingly.

Paris has arrived. I don't know if you know him. He is the second son of the King of Troy. He made an unfortunate marriage with a girl called Œnone, the daughter of a rather disreputable river-person. They were miserable about it. He is very good-looking—if one admires those kind of looks, which I don't. He dresses in an absurd way and he looks theatrical. Besides, I hate men with curly hair. He has a few accomplishments. He shoots well and plays on the double flute quite remarkably well for a man who is not a professional; but he is totally uninteresting, and, what is more, impossible. But Helen likes him. Isn't it extraordinary that she always has liked impossible men? They sit for hours together saying nothing at all. I don't in the least mind his paying no attention to me—in fact, I am too thankful not to have to talk to him; but I do think it 's bad manners, as I am his hostess.

Helen is certainly looking better this year than she has ever looked; but she still dresses in that affectedly over-simple way, which is a pity. I don't know how long he is going to stay. I don't mind his being here, but Helen and he are really most inconsiderate. They use my sitting-room as though it were theirs, and they never seem to think that I may have things to do of my own, and they expect me to go out with them, which ends in their walking on ahead and my being left with Menelaus, whom I am very fond of indeed, but who bores me. He talks of nothing but horses and quoits. It is a great lesson to Queen Hecuba for having brought up her son so badly. Paris was educated entirely by a shepherd, you know, on Mount Ida. The result is his manners are shocking. Helen doesn't see it. Isn't it odd? I must say he's nice with children, and Orestes likes him.

I am your sincere friend,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

MYCENAE.

Most honoured Aegisthus,

We are in great trouble. I told you Helen was

attracted by Paris. We of course thought nothing of it, because Helen always has flirted with rather vulgar men, and her flirtations were, we thought, the harmless distractions of a woman who has remained, and always will remain, a sentimental girl.

Imagine our surprise and dismay! Paris and Helen have run away together, and they have gone to Troy! Helen left a note behind for Menelaus saying she realized that she had made a mistake, that she hated hypocrisy, and thought it more honest to leave him. She said she would always think of him with affection. Poor Menelaus is distracted, but he is behaving beautifully.

Agamemnon is furious. He is overcome by the disgrace to his family, and he is so cross. We are all very miserable. Agamemnon says that the family honour must be redeemed at all costs, and that they will have to make an expedition against Troy to fetch Helen back. I think this is quite ridiculous. No amount of expeditions and wars can undo what has been done. I am sure you will sympathize with us in our trouble. I must say it is most unfair on my children. I shouldn't have minded so much if Iphigenia wasn't grown up.

Electra has got whooping-cough, but she is going

on as well as can be expected. I have no patience with Helen. She always was utterly thoughtless.

Your sincere friend,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

MYCENAE.

Most honoured Aegisthus,

There is no end of worry and fuss going on. Odysseus, the King of Ithaca, has arrived here with his wife, Penelope. They discuss the prospects of the expedition from morning till night, and I am left alone with Penelope. She has borrowed my only embroidery frame, and is working some slippers for her husband. They are at least two sizes too small. She talks of nothing but her boy, her dog, her dairy, and her garden, and I can't tell you how weary I am of it. She made me very angry yesterday by saying that I spoilt Orestes, and that I should be sorry for it some day. She is always throwing up her boy Telemachus to me. Whenever Helen is mentioned she puts on a face as much as to say: "Do not defile me."

Your sincere friend,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

MYCENAE.

Most honoured Aegisthus,

My worst fears have been realized. They are going to make an expedition against Troy on a large scale. Odysseus is at the bottom of it. I cannot say how much I dislike him. All the Kings have volunteered to go, but the Fleet will not be ready for two years, so I am in hopes that something may happen in the meantime to prevent it.

Iphigenia is learning to make bandages, and says she will go to the front to look after the wounded. I am, of course, against this, and think it 's absurd, but unfortunately she can make her father do what she likes. My only consolation is that the war cannot possibly last more than a week. The Trojans have no regular army. They are a handful of untrained farmers, and the town cannot stand a siege. It is all too silly. It is too bad of Helen to have caused all this fuss.

Your sincere friend,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

P.S.—No, of course I haven't written to Helen. She is as good as dead to me.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus
(*Two years later*)

MYCENAE.

My dear Aegisthus,

We have at last got some news. The Fleet has arrived at Aulis, and they are waiting for a favourable wind to be able to go on. At present they are becalmed. They are all well. Iphigenia writes that she is enjoying herself immensely. She has the decency to add that she misses me. I have not had a good night's rest since they have started.

Your most sincere friend,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

My dear friend,

Please come here at once. I am in dreadful trouble. From the last letter I received from Agamemnon I understood there was something wrong and that he was hiding something. To-day I got a letter from Calchas, breaking to me in the most brutal manner an appalling tragedy and a savage, horrible, and impious crime! They have

sacrificed my darling Iphigenia—to Artemis, of all goddesses! to get a propitious wind for their horrible Fleet! I am heartbroken. I cannot write another word. Please come directly.

Your friend,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

(*Two months later*)

I see no reason why you should not come back; I have a right to ask whom I like to stay here. Do come as soon as possible; I am very lonely without you. Now that I no longer communicate with Agamemnon in order to get news I have written to Helen and sent the letter by a very clever silk merchant, who is certain to be able to worm his way into Troy. Come as soon as you get this.

C.

P.S.—Agamemnon still writes, but I do not take the slightest notice of his letters. I trust the Trojans will be victorious. They have at any rate determined to make a fight for it. Our generals are certain to quarrel, Achilles and Agamemnon never get on well. And Achilles' temper is dreadful.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus
(*Three months later*)

I can no longer bear these short visits and these long absences. I have arranged for you to stay here permanently.

I wrote to Agamemnon last month a cold and dignified business letter, in which I pointed out that unless some man came here to look after things, everything would go to pieces. I suggested you. I have now got his answer. He agrees, and thinks it an excellent plan.

Odysseus wrote me, I must say, a most amusing letter. He says everything is at sixes and sevens, and that Priam's eldest son is far the most capable soldier on either side. He expects to win, but says it will be a far longer business than they thought it would be at first. Come as quickly as you can. Best and most beloved.

Your C.

Helen to Clytaemnestra
(*Ten years later*)

TROY.

Dearest Clytaemnestra,

Your letters are a great comfort to me when I get them, which is very seldom. Everything is going on just the same. It is now the tenth year of the siege, and I see no reason why it should ever end. I am dreadfully afraid the Greeks will never take Troy.

I can give you no idea of how dull everything is here. We do the same thing and see the same people every day. We know exactly what is going on in the Greek camp, and most of the time is spent in discussing the gossip, which bores me to death. You are quite right in what you say about Paris. I made a fatal mistake. It is all Aphrodite's fault. He has become too dreadful now. He is still very good-looking, but even compared with Menelaus he is pitiable in every way and every bit as cross. Hector is very nice, but painfully dull. The King and the Queen are both very kind, but as for Cassandra, she is intolerable. She is always prophesying dreadful calamities which never come

off. She said, for instance, that I would lose my looks and make a long journey in Egypt. As if I would go to Egypt from here! As to my looks, you know, darling, I never was vain, was I? But I can honestly tell you that, if anything, I have rather *improved* than otherwise, and among the Trojans' women, who are absolute frights and have no more idea of dressing than sheep, I look magnificent. Andromache has got quite a nice face, and I really like her; but you should see her figure—it's like an elephant's, and her feet are enormous, and her hands red and sore from needlework. She won't even use a thimble! Cassandra always dresses in deep mourning. Why, we cannot conceive, because none of her relatives have been killed.

There is really only one person in the palace I can talk to—and that is Aeneas, who is one of the commanders. He is quite nice. What I specially like about him is the nice way in which he talks about his parents.

The Greeks are quarrelling more than ever. Achilles won't fight at all because Agamemnon insisted on taking away Briseis (who is lovely) from him. Wasn't that exactly like Agamemnon? I hope this won't make you jealous, darling, but I

don't expect it will, because you have never forgiven Agamemnon, have you?

Everybody tries to be kind to me, and I have nothing to complain of. They all mean well, and in a way this makes it worse. For instance, every morning, when we meet for the midday meal, Priam comes into the room saying to me: "Well, how 's the little runaway to-day?" He has made this joke every day for the last ten years. And then they always talk about the cowardice and incompetence of the Greeks, taking for granted that as I have married into a Trojan family I must have become a Trojan myself. It is most tactless of them not to understand what I must be feeling.

I suppose I am inconsistent, but the pro-Greek party irritate me still more. They are headed by Pandarus, and are simply longing for their own side to be beaten, because they say that I ought to have been given up directly, and that the war was brought about entirely owing to Priam having got into the hands of the Egyptian merchants.

I manage to get some Greek stuffs smuggled into the town, and the merchants tell me vaguely what people are wearing at Mycenae; but one can't get anything properly made here. Andromache has all her clothes made at home by her women—to save

expense. She says that in times of war one ought to sacrifice oneself. Of course, I can't do this, however much I should like to, as the Trojans expect me to look nice, and would be very angry if I wasn't properly dressed.

I feel if I could only meet Odysseus we might arrange some plan for getting the Greeks into the town.

How is everything going on at home? There is a very strict censorship about letters, and we are all supposed to show our letters to Antenor before they go. I don't, of course. I daresay, however, many of your letters have been intercepted, because I have only heard from you five times since the siege began, and not once this year. Kiss the dear children from me.

Shall I ever see you again? I shall try my best to come home.

Your loving sister,

HELEN.

Clytaemnestra to Helen

MYCENAE.

Dearest Helen,

Your last letter has reached me. I must implore you to be very careful about what you do. I hope with all my heart that the siege will be over soon; but if it is I don't think it would be quite wise for you to come back directly. You see everybody here is extremely unreasonable. Instead of understanding that Agamemnon and Odysseus were entirely responsible for this absurd war, Agamemnon has got his friends to put the blame entirely on you, and they have excited the people against you. It's so like a man, that, isn't it? I have been very lonely, because all our friends are away. Aegisthus is staying here just to look after the household and the affairs of the city. But he hardly counts, and he is so busy that I hardly ever see him now. There is a strong pro-Trojan party here, too. They say we had absolutely no right to go to war, and that it was simply an expedition of pirates and freebooters, and I must say it is very difficult to disprove it. If there is any talk of the siege ending, please let me know *at once*. Electra has grown into

a fine girl; but she is not as lovely as poor darling Iphigenia.

Your loving sister,

CLYTAEMNESTRA.

Penelope to Odysseus

ITHACA.

My darling Husband,

I wish you would write a little more distinctly; we have the greatest difficulty in reading your letters.

When will this horrid siege be over? I think it is disgraceful of you all to be so long about it. To think that when you started you only said that it would last a month! Mind you come back the moment it is over, and come back *straight*, by Aulis.

The country is looking lovely. I have built a new house for the swineherd, as he complained about the roof letting the rain in. Next year, we must really have a new paling round the garden, as the children get in and steal the apples. We can't afford it *this* year. The people have no sense of honesty; they steal everything. Telemachus is very well. He can read and write nicely, but is most backward about his sums. He takes a great

interest in the war, and has made up a map on which he marks the position of the troops with little flags.

I am surprised to hear of Achilles' *disgraceful* conduct. If I were there I would give him a piece of my mind. I hope Ajax has not had any more of his attacks. Has he tried cinnamon with fomented myrtle leaves? It ought to be taken three times a day *after* meals. The news from Mycenae is deplorable. Clytaemnestra appears to be quite shameless and callous. Aegisthus is now openly living in the house. All decent people have ceased to go near them. I have had a few visitors, but nobody of any importance.

I am working you a piece of tapestry for your bedroom. I hope to get it finished by the time you come back. I hope that when the city is taken Helen will be severely punished.

We have taught Argus to growl whenever Hector is mentioned. I don't, of course, allow any one to mention Helen in this house. Telemachus sends you his loving duty. He is writing to you himself, but the letter isn't finished.

Your devoted wife,

PENELOPE.

Helen to Clytaemnestra

SUNIUM.

Dearest Clytaemnestra,

Since I last wrote to you several important things have happened. Hector was killed yesterday by Achilles. I am, of course, very sorry for them all. All Cassandra said was, "I told you so!" She is so heartless. I have at last managed to communicate with Odysseus; we have thought of a very good plan for letting the Greeks into the city. Please do not repeat this. I shall come home at once with Menelaus. He is my husband, after all. I shall come straight to Mycenae. I doubt if I shall have time to write again. I am sending this through Aenida, who is most useful in getting letters brought and sent.

Please have some patterns for me to choose from. I hope to be back in a month.

Your loving sister,

HELEN.

Agamemnon to Clytaemnestra

SUNIUM.

Dear Clytaemnestra,

We have had a very good journey, and I shall reach Mycenae the day after to-morrow in the morning. Please have a hot bath ready for me. I am bringing Cassandra with me. She had better have the room looking north, as she hates the sun. She is very nervous and upset, and you must be kind to her.

Your loving husband,

AGAMEMNON.

Odysseus to Penelope

THE ISLAND OF OGYGIA.

Dearest Penelope,

We arrived here after a very tiresome voyage. I will not tire you with the details, which are numerous and technical. The net result is that the local physician says I cannot proceed with my journey until I am thoroughly rested. This spot is pleasant, but the only society I have is that of poor dear Calypso. She means well and is most

hospitable, but you can imagine how vexed I am by this delay and the intolerable tedium of this enforced repose. Kiss Telemachus from me.

Your loving husband,

ODYSSEUS.

Clytaemnestra to Aegisthus

I am sending this by runner. Come back directly. I expect Agamemnon any moment. The bonfires are already visible. Please bring a good strong net and a sharp axe with you. I will explain when you arrive. I have quite decided that half measures are out of the question.

C.

WITH THE CARTHAGINIAN FLEET, 216 B.C.

Letter from a Carthaginian Civilian to a Friend in Carthage

On Board the *Hamilcar Barca*,
SARDINIA.

My dear Gisco,

It is now five weeks that we have been in this place, and we shall have to stay here until the "battering practice" is over. We have already got through our "rammers' test." I do not think it is a bad place myself, and most of the people seem to prefer it to Thule, where they spent the whole summer, except Mago our physician, who cannot endure either the Romans or the Sardinians, and who is longing to get back to the glittering quays and the broad market-places of Carthage. It is true that the Sardinians are a thievish race, and they seldom, if ever, speak the truth; moreover, they trade on the honesty and

the good nature of our people, and our unfamiliarity with their various and uncouth jargons. For instance, a favourite plan of theirs is this: many of them gain their living by the catching of lobsters, which they send by Ostia to Rome to supply the banquets of the rich patricians of that city. One such fisherman came to the captain of our vessel with the following complaint: He professed that for many weeks he had toiled and caught a great number of lobsters; these lobsters, he said, he was keeping against the feasts of the Saturnalia at Rome, in a large wicker basket not far from the shore; and that some of our men having gone ashore in one of our swift and brass-prowed boats, had in the darkness of twilight collided with his wicker basket and caused the escape of many hundreds of live lobsters, for which loss he demanded a compensation amounting to two hundred talents. On consulting the Roman Magistrate of the place we learnt that this fisherman made a similar demand from every ship which visited the bay; moreover, that he had caught but one lobster. So although he reduced his demand to the eighth of one talent, it was refused to him.

Another stratagem of the Sardinian native is to demand money for the poultry destroyed by the

sailors of our ship. Every family in the village complained that their poultry had been annihilated by our unprincipled mariners, but little credence was lent to the tale, because at the moment when the complaint was made there was only one hen in the village, a dead one that had just perished of old age.

Life on board this vessel is full of variety and interest to the stranger. Long before sunrise one is wakened by the sound of a brazen trumpet. This is followed by much whistling and a deep, but not unmusical, call from some elder sailor, who exhorts and finally persuades those over whom he is put in authority to rise from their narrow couches and to taste the morning air. They then set about to wash the upper part of the ship, an occupation which is pursued more from a disinterested love of cleaning than from any practical purpose, as by evening the ship is as dirty as it was before it was washed. But the men enjoy this work, and indeed the only people who suffer from it are such men as myself who are on board ship by chance, and who are used to sleeping uninterruptedly until some time after the sun has arisen. Some people have been known to sleep unconcernedly through all this noise, but such men are rare.

An hour or two after this process of washing is accomplished, food is served to the officers and men of the ship. The officers rarely partake of more than one olive in the early morning; such is their endurance and their self-denial. This they wash down with a small glass of red native wine, which is singularly pleasant and exhilarating. As soon as this light repast is over the real business of the day begins.

First of all the men are inspected on deck, and it is carefully noted whether they are in a state of cleanliness and order, and further whether they are sober enough to perform their daily duties. Any man who is found twice running to be in a state of absolute intoxication is drowned, and the ship is thereby disembarrassed of superfluous cargo. The greater part of the forenoon is spent in teaching the young their duties, and in teaching the lads who have lately arrived from Carthage the full duties of a seaman. This task is carried out with patience and persistence by the instructors, who are never known to raise their voice in anger, or to use a harsh word. Indeed the nearest approach to harshness which I observed was when one day I heard one of the elder mariners say to a lad who was slow to perform his duty, "Take care lest I should

observe thee to bend." This is a nautical expression which means, so I am told, "be strenuous in all things."

At noon the second repast of the day is taken, the food consisting of black bread, herbs, preserved olives, and a small fish which is caught in great quantities in the bay by such as are skilful. When the meal is over the officers retire to a small cabin, where they aid their digestion by playful gambols, such as wrestling and beating each other with their fists, until they are weary. After this they fall into a profound slumber on the benches of the cabin, with the exception of one officer who needs must always remain on deck to observe the weather and the omens, and make note thereof, for the captain of the vessel is inquisitive with regard to such matters.

The younger officers are respectful to their seniors, and address them as "Suffetes"; but this outward form of respect when duty is concerned does not prevent the more youthful of the juniors from expressing the innate exuberance and impertinence which are natural to youth. Moreover, they call each other by familiar names, such as "Sheep," "Hog," "Little Hog," "Little Pig," "Canary," "Cat," "Little Cat."

Later in the afternoon there is a further inspection on the deck, which takes place to the sound of many trumpets. At sunset, after a still louder blast of the trumpet, the third repast is held. The officers attend this in state, wearing silken togas, jewelled helmets, and golden chains, and during all the meal a hundred slaves make music on silver cymbals, harps, and drums. This they do with great skill, knowing that should they be unskilful in their art, they risk being hurled into the sea. All the officers dine together, with the exception of the Captain, who feeds in a small turret by himself and partakes of especial dainties due to his rank, such as nightingales' tongues and the livers of peacocks.

At the end of the repast the eldest of the officers fills a golden bowl full of wine and water and drinks to the health of the "Gerusia." Immediately before he does so the goblet of every officer present is filled with wine and water, but should any one taste of his wine before the Elder of the assembly rises to his feet, he is constrained to empty one after another every goblet at the board and to refill them at his own expense. And this proves a tax both on his moral courage, his physical endurance, and his material resources.

When this ceremony has been accomplished such officers who are skilled in the art make music on the flute or the tom-tom, while others sing plaintive Carthaginian ditties about the dark-eyed lasses they have left behind them. Sometimes others, still more skilful, give a display of dancing. After this has continued for about an hour another deafening blast on the trumpet announces that all must seek their cabins for the night, save those unhappy officers who take it by turn for a space of four hours at a time to observe the features of the landscape, the aspect of the heavens, the position of the stars, and the nature of the omens. According as these omens are favourable, or unfavourable, the nature of the following day's work is determined.

There are in the ship a particular race of men who are neither soldiers nor sailors; these are called by the Latin name "Legio Classica." Their duties consist in maintaining discipline amongst the company of the ship and in dealing out retribution when it is necessary; they are well known for the unerring accuracy of their statements, so much so that if any one in the ship makes a statement or relates a tale that bears in it the signs of improbability, he will be ordered to go and tell it to the men of this legion, for it is known that should the

statement be untruthful or inaccurate they would be swift to detect it and to laugh the man to scorn.

The monotony of life on board ship, and the rigour of the discipline enforced, are relieved by many pleasant occupations. Thus the officers throw dice on a place of the ship specially appointed for the purpose, which is called the "bridge," and often in the evening the sailors sing together in soft and tuneful chorus. With regard to the "ramming" and the "battering practice"—both of them most interesting spectacles—I will write to you another time. In the meantime, farewell.

HANNO.

P.S.—The Roman Fleet is expected here to-morrow. It is said they intend to build eight *Hamilcar Barcas*.

LESBIA ILLA

. . . Lesbia illa,
Illa Lesbia, quam Catullus unam
Plus quam se atque suos amavit omnes.

Extract from a letter written by Clodia, the wife of Metellus Celer, to her friend Portia in Athens

We arrived at Baiae yesterday evening. I am most thankful the journey is over, because Metellus is a most trying traveller. He started, of course, by making a scene directly he saw my luggage. I had scarcely taken anything, only what was absolutely indispensable, and I got it all into eight boxes; but men never know how much room clothes take up. As it is, I have got nothing to wear at all. But as soon as Metellus saw the litters with my poor luggage in them he lost his temper, and during the whole journey he threw my extravagance at me. Needless to say, he took far more things than I did. Men think because their

clothes are cheap and cost nothing, and because a toga lasts them four or five years, we ought to be able to do the same. But it 's no use discussing that with a husband. No husband in the world has ever understood, or ever will understand, how expensive our clothes are.

We found the villa looking very clean and fresh; and it is a great blessing to get away from Rome. I never mean to go back there as long as I live; especially after what has happened. I suppose you have heard all about it, but I want you to know the truth, as everybody in Rome is telling horrible lies about me and giving a wrong complexion to the whole story, especially Lalage, who is a spiteful cat, and is sure to write and tell you all about it.

Well, of course I've known Catullus for years. We were almost brought up together. He was always in and out of the house. He used to amuse me; Metellus liked him, and we were both very kind to him. I used to think he was thoroughly nice. He was so sympathetic when my sparrow died, and quite understood what a shock that was, and what a state of despair I was in. By the way, I've got a new sparrow now. It 's quite tame. I've called it Julius. We used, in fact, to see a great deal of Catullus. We were useful to him, too, be-

cause he met a great many clever and important people at our house; and when we first knew him nobody had ever heard of him. It only shows what a mistake it is to be kind to people. After a time he began to give himself airs, and treated the house as if it belonged to him. He complained of the food and the wine. He insisted upon my sending away Balbus, the best slave I have ever had. He made Metellus buy some old Falernian from a cousin of his (that disreputable Rufinus who lost all his money at Capua last year). The fact was, his head was turned. People flattered him (Lalage, of course, told him he was wonderful), and he began really to think he was a real poet, a genius, and I don't know what, and he became quite insufferable. He began to meddle with my affairs, and to dictate to me about my friends. But it was when I got to know Julius Caesar that the crisis came.

Of course you know as well as I do that nobody could possibly be *in love* with Julius Caesar. He is *quite* bald now, and I think—in fact, I always did think—most tiresome. I never could understand what people saw in him. And, oh, what a bore he used to be when he told me about his campaigns, and drew imaginary plans on the table with his finger! But of course I was *obliged* to be civil

to him because of Metellus and my brother Clodius, to whom he has been useful. Directly he began coming to our house—and he came very often, he had to see Metellus on business constantly—Catullus became quite mad. He lost his head, and I had to arrange for them not to meet, which was most annoying and inconvenient, as they both came every day, and sometimes twice a day. I know I ought to have taken steps at once to put an end to all that nonsense. But I was foolishly kind-hearted for a time, and gave way weakly. It was a great mistake.

The crisis came the other day. I had arranged a supper party, really a divine party. Just Pollio, Julius Caesar, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Lavinia, Lalage, and a few others. I didn't tell Catullus, as I thought he wouldn't quite do (apart from Julius Caesar being there), as I had invited Bassianus, who is a *real* professional poet, and writes the most beautiful things about the moonlight, memory, and broken hearts. His verses quite make me cry sometimes. They are far better than Catullus's, which I confess I can't read at all. But Metellus says it 's unfair to compare an amateur like Catullus with a *real* writer like Bassianus.

Somebody told Catullus about the supper, I sus-

pect it was Lalage—she is jealous of me, and Catullus made up to her years ago and then left her. He came to me and made a scene, and said he was coming too. Then he tried to find out who else was coming, and I refused to tell him. He said: "Of course, you have asked Julius Caesar," and I said: "It's not your business; I shall ask the people I choose to my own house without consulting you." Then he said a lot of horribly unfair things about Julius Caesar, and a lot of absurd things about me; only I managed to calm him more or less. All this happened in the afternoon, and he went away really quite repentant and meek. He always was easy to manage if one had time, and I told him Cicero had praised his verses, which soothed him, although it wasn't true. He never could resist flattery.

The supper began very well. Julius Caesar was, I must say, brilliant. He can be really clever and pleasant sometimes, and he talked to me the whole time, and this made Lalage very angry; she was between Metellus and Bassianus, and she bored them. Then suddenly in the middle of supper, just as I was beginning to feel more or less happy about it all, Catullus walked in, very flushed and excited. I saw at once he had been

drinking. He was given a place between Cicero and Lavinia, and opposite me and Julius Caesar; and no sooner had he settled himself on his couch than he began to monopolize the conversation. He talked at the top of his voice. He was rather amusing at first, and Cicero answered him back, and for a time everything went well; but I was dreadfully uneasy, as I felt certain something would happen, and there was a dangerous look in his eye. Besides which he drank off a great bowl of wine and water (with very little water in it), and grew more and more flushed and excited. He didn't pay any attention to Julius Caesar at all, and talked across to me as though Julius Caesar hadn't been there. But Julius Caesar didn't seem to notice that Catullus was being rude, and he turned to me and really was charming. He said, among other things, that the only woman he had ever seen who could compare with me for wearing clothes *properly* was Cleopatra, but that she was dowdy in comparison with me. He said, too, that I was the only woman he had ever met who had any real grasp of the fiscal question. This made Catullus mad; and he asked Lavinia in a loud whisper, which we all heard, who the gentleman sitting opposite might be who was slightly bald. I was dreadfully uncom-

fortable, because Julius Caesar can't bear any allusions to his baldness (it 's so silly, as if it mattered to us), and he turned red in the face.

Then Catullus began to chaff Cicero about his verses, but as Cicero knows him very well it didn't much matter, he knew he didn't mean it really. To make a diversion, I proposed that Bassianus should sing us a song. But Catullus broke in and said: "Rather than that I will recite a poem."

I was very angry, and spoke my mind. I said I thought it was most rash and daring for an amateur to recite before professionals like Cicero and Bassianus. I was really frightened, because Catullus's verses are either terribly long and serious—I have never been able to listen when he reads them out; in fact, I always used to ask him to read to me when I wanted to add up my bills mentally—or else they are short and quite *impossible*.

He then turned scarlet, and said something about drawing-room poetasters who wrote stuff fit for women, and, looking at Caesar, he recited a short poem which was *dreadful*. I didn't understand it all, but I felt—and I am sure every one else felt—that he meant to be rude. I sent him a small note by a slave, telling him that if he did not know how to behave he had better leave the house. But I

looked as if I hadn't noticed anything, and tried to treat it all as a joke. But every one felt hot and uncomfortable.

I then ignored Catullus altogether, and devoted my whole attention to Julius Caesar. I suppose it was that which really made him lose all his self-control. He entirely forgot himself. He got up and said that, as the company did not like comic verse, he had written a serious poem, which he was quite certain would interest them. He had no wish, he said (and for once in his life he was modest!), to rival such great writers of verse, such masters of music and passion, as were Cicero and Bassianus, but his verse, although it could not rival theirs in art and inspiration, had at least the merit of truth and sincerity. He said (and he almost shouted this) he was a plain man, who expressed in the simplest possible words what were the common experiences of every one, from the Senator to the man in the street. (So vulgar!) He said his verses were about a woman (how could I ever have thought he was a gentleman!) who was far-famed for her beauty, and still better known for her heartlessness. She heightened her wickedness by the supreme coquetry of pretending to be virtuous. She professed virtue and practised vice. (He always was coarse.) He

would not name her; he would call her by a name which was colourless, namely, Lesbia. (Of course every one knew he had written verses to me under that name!)

Then, looking me straight in the face, he recited a poem which was *quite*, *quite* impossible, with a *horrible* word in it (at least Lalage said it was horrible). Pollio came to the rescue, and said that Catullus was ill, and dragged him out of the room. And in a way it was true, for he was quite tipsy, and tears were rolling down his cheeks; and I do hate drunken men, but, above all, I hate coarseness.

The next day all Rome knew the poem by heart. And it was a cowardly, blackguard thing to do, and I shall *never* speak to him again as long as I live, and I shall *never*, *never* let him come into my house again. Not being a gentleman he can't know what one feels about those kind of things. He is thoroughly second-rate and coarse to the core, although he oughtn't to be. Of course, I really don't care a bit. Only if Lalage writes and tells you about it, don't believe a word she says. I hate Catullus. I must stop now.

Your loving

CLODIA.

P.S.—Lalage had the impertinence to say that I ought to make allowance for men of genius. As if Catullus was a genius! I asked Cicero (who likes him) if his poetry was really good, and he said that, to be honest, it was a *bad* imitation of Calvus's and his own, only that it was very good for an amateur.

P.P.S.—Julius Caesar is coming to stay with us next Saturday, if he can get away. Don't forget the Persian silk, the palest shade, six and a half yards.

CLEOPATRA AT ROME

Letter from Charmian, at Alexandria, to her friend Chloe, at Baiae, 44 *B.C.*

It all came so suddenly. I never thought that I should leave Rome without seeing you again and without being able to say farewell. Even now I cannot believe that it is true and that the whole thing is not a dream. I keep on thinking that I shall wake up and find myself once more by the banks of the Tiber, sitting in the shade of the terebinths, listening to the amusing discussions of Atticus, Cicero, and Caesar.

The suddenness with which everything happened was terrible. It all began with the dinner party which Cleopatra had arranged on the eve of the great event which was to happen on the Feast of the Lupercalia, when Caesar was to be offered the Crown. Cleopatra was in the highest spirits. Some months before this Cicero had asked her to get

him from Alexandria some manuscripts and some Canopian vases, of which he had need, as such things are rare in your barbarous cities. Cleopatra had promised to do this, and she told him that she had done it. As a matter of fact she had forgotten all about it. He was invited to the dinner, and had sent her a note saying that he would be delighted to come, and reminding her of her promise with regard to the manuscripts and the vases. He had already reminded her two or three times before. As she read the note she was convulsed with laughter, and when I asked her what she would say to Cicero she answered that she would of course tell him what she had already said before, that the vases and the manuscripts were on the way. I asked her if she was going to send for them, and she answered firmly: "No, it is a great mistake to lend books to men of letters. They never give them back, or if they do there are always a lot of thumb marks on them, or notes in the margin, which are worse. I like my books to be clean."

She took immense pains to dress herself that night for the dinner, according to the very latest Greek fashion, that is to say, in the austerest simplicity. She wore a gray silk robe made absolutely plain, and one wild flower in her fair hair. The

curious thing is—which I have noticed since we got back to Alexandria—that here she is considered a real beauty, but we had not been back a week before she realized that what suited Rome does not suit Alexandria. So she has entirely changed her style of dress and of demeanour. She has had her hair dyed a dark bronzed red; she wears gold tissue, golden bracelets and chains, and she goes about fanned by Cupids with huge peacock feathers, and wearing a stiff gold train. Of course in Rome or in Greece this would be thought vulgar, but it is quite right here, and she is so clever that she divined this at once.

Well, to go on with the dinner party. It was not quite a success. Caesar, who had been anxious about politics during the last week, and in a frightfully bad temper, was preoccupied and absent-minded. When Cicero arrived he was very civil and did not mention the Greek vases directly, but we all saw he was thinking of nothing else, and he managed to get the conversation first on to Alexandria, then on to the library, and finally he said: "By the way, I can't quite remember, but I think you were kind enough once to say that you were going to have a manuscript sent me from the library."

Cleopatra clapped her hands together and said: "Of course! I think they must have arrived this morning. We had a messenger from Alexandria, but the things have not yet been unpacked, as everybody in the house has been busy. But I will let you know to-morrow morning without fail."

Cicero kissed her hand and told her she was the divinest and most thoughtful of women.

There were quite a lot of people at dinner, and several came afterwards, among others a man called Mark Antony, who is a well-known gambler, and who is still in the Army. Cleopatra had once or twice asked Caesar to bring him, but Caesar had always said that he was not the kind of man she would like, as he was boisterous, uneducated, and rather common. Caesar was perfectly right about this, because Cleopatra would not look at him. He made several attempts to speak to her, and paid her one or two extravagant but badly-turned compliments, and she said to me afterwards that it was astonishing how tiresome these Roman soldiers were. During dinner she made signs to me as though to point out that Antony was drinking a great deal more than was good for him—which he did do, and his conversation and his jokes were in the worst possible taste. Cleopatra herself was at

her very best, so modest, so quiet, so delicately witty, so highly distinguished and refined.

They talked of mathematics and astronomy, and Cleopatra astounded Atticus by her knowledge of these sciences. Mark Antony took no part in this conversation. He was frankly bored. From astronomy the talk went on to music, and from music to dancing. Here Mark Antony brightened up and monopolized the whole conversation by describing a dancer from Asia he had seen two or three days before. The play of the muscles on her arms, he said, was quite unparalleled, and she managed to execute a rippling movement which started from her shoulders and went to the tips of her fingers.

In the middle of dinner Caesar received a note. I guessed at once it was from his wife, whose jealousy lately had been something quite frightening. Caesar read the note and was visibly disturbed and irritated. Cleopatra pretended not to notice the incident. The moment dinner was over Caesar said that he would have to go home for a moment in order to despatch a piece of public business, but that he would be back shortly. He was still living, you know, in the public offices in the Via Sacra. Cleopatra did not make the slightest objection to

his going; she only said that she hoped he would be back soon, and that as for herself she would be well occupied talking to Cicero, whom she had not seen for some time.

Caesar was just making ready to go, and the flute-players had been sent for, when Casca (who, I think, is the best-looking young man in Rome) walked up to Cleopatra and occupied the empty seat next to her. Caesar suddenly changed his mind, and said he would not go home after all. This was typical of his behaviour during these days: he had been constantly changing his mind about small matters and never seemed able to come to any decision. Besides this, he was always jealous of any one younger than himself, especially of Casca, who has got such thick hair.

Mark Antony tried to lure Cleopatra into conversation with him, paying her still more fulsome and still more crude compliments than before. And she, with perfect civility but with icy determination, ignored the compliments and took no notice of him.

After the flute-players had ceased we all had our fortunes told by an Asiatic soothsayer. He told Cleopatra and myself that we would be very lucky, but that we should beware of figs and the worms

inside them. We laughed a great deal at this, because neither Cleopatra nor myself ever eat raw fruit. He told Mark Antony that he would love and be loved by the most wonderful woman in the world; upon which Mark Antony bent on one knee before Cleopatra and did mock homage. You should have seen her face! He did not feel inclined to do it twice, and there is no doubt that he knew he had made a grotesque exhibition of himself; in fact it was rather painful, and we were all sorry for him.

The soothsayer told Caesar that all would be well with him should he follow the advice of those who loved him most. When the soothsayer said this, Caesar looked at Cleopatra with infinite tenderness, and she smiled at him very sweetly. It was all I could do to keep from laughing. The vanity of men is extraordinary! I thought to myself—How can that conceited old politician think that a woman as young, as clever, and as pretty as Cleopatra could possibly care for him, or feel anything else but disgust at his attentions!

The soothsayer then told Cicero's fortune. He said that his worst enemy was his tongue, but that if he went through life without offending any of the present company he would have a fortunate and

successful career. We laughed a great deal at this, as every one in the room happened to be a great friend of his.

Caesar was not satisfied with what the soothsayer had told him, and asked further details; but the soothsayer said that it was unlucky to tell a person's fortune twice in one evening, upon which Caesar desisted, since he is intensely superstitious.

The guests went away, leaving Caesar and Cleopatra alone. I was in the next room and could hear what they said through the silken curtain. I listened attentively. Caesar began by calling her the sun of his life, and she complained of headache. Then he turned the conversation on to serious topics, and said he was greatly in need of her advice with regard to the events of the next day. Should he or should he not receive the Crown which was to be offered him by Mark Antony in the Forum?

Cleopatra said that if he did not accept it he would be a fool and a coward, and she for her part would never speak to him again. This seemed to satisfy him, and he went away.

The next morning he did not appear at the villa. We heard the noise of cheering, but we first learnt what had happened from one of the slaves who had been in the crowd. He told us that Caesar had

refused the Crown. Cleopatra was frightfully put out and really angry, for she had determined that if Caesar accepted the Crown she would make him divorce Calphurnia, and marry him herself. It was her great ambition to be Queen, though nobody knew of this at the time of course, because ever since she had lived in Rome, Cleopatra had been a model not only of Roman economy but of Greek moderation, and her household books had been a lesson to the strictest of Roman matrons. That is all changed now, and I must say it is rather a relief.

To go on with my story: Caesar himself came to see us before supper. He said that he had refused the Crown for the moment because he did not think the occasion was opportune, but that he firmly intended to accept it on a later occasion. "I am only drawing back," he said, "in order to take a greater leap." Cleopatra said sarcastically that no doubt he knew best and that he had been right to climb down. He told her, among other things, that a soothsayer—not the same one we had seen—had told him to beware of the Ides of March, when he intended to go to the Senate, and he asked Cleopatra whether she thought it would be wise for him to go.

She laughed at the superstition and told him that

if he paid attention to such trifles people would begin to say that he was an old woman; in fact they were already saying it, and she was beginning to think it was true. This annoyed him so much that he banged the door, and went away in a huff. We expected him, however, to come to us the next day, as these sort of quarrels had often happened before.

But Caesar did not come the next day, and a week passed without our seeing him. I suggested to Cleopatra she had better write, but she was quite obdurate. The days passed, and it was fully three weeks before we had further news of him. That was on the Ides of March, when a slave rushed into the house and told us that Caesar had been murdered, and that we had better escape as soon as possible, since all friends of his were in danger.

Cleopatra showed great presence of mind. She packed her jewels and nothing else; she stained her face with walnut-juice, and put on a coarse peasant's garment, bidding myself and Iras do likewise; then, taking plenty of money with us, we went out through the back gate, crossed the river, and quite unobserved reached the Gate of Ostia. There we took a litter and started for Ostia, whence we embarked for Alexandria.

We have now been here a week, and Cleopatra,

as I have already told you, is completely changed. But the change as far as we are concerned is for the better, for I can give you no idea of the fun we are having. Please come here as soon as you can. Alexandria is far more amusing than either Rome or Athens, and there is no tiresome Caesar to interfere with us. Farewell.

CHARMIAN.

OVID'S BANISHMENT

Letter from Diogenes, a Sculptor, to a friend in Athens

My work, or rather the business which called me to Rome, is now accomplished, and the Caryatids which I was commissioned to make for the Pantheon of Agrippa are now in their place. But in what a place! Alas, they have been set up so high that their whole effect is lost, and the work might just as well be that of any Roman bungler. The Romans are indeed barbarians. They consider that as long as a thing is big and expensive it is beautiful; they take luxury for comfort, notoriety for fame, eccentricity for genius, and riches for wisdom; or rather they deem that wealth is the only thing which counts in the modern world, and here at Rome this is true. Their attempts at art are in the highest degree ludicrous. Yesterday I visited the studio of Ludius, who is renowned in this city for his decorative work. He paints walls and ceilings, and the

Emperor has employed him to decorate his villa at Naples.

His work, which is not devoid of a certain talent, is disciplined by no sense of proportion. It would not be tolerated in Greece for a moment owing to an extravagance and an exaggeration which, so far from displaying any originality, merely form the futile mask of a fundamental banality. The man himself wears his hair yards long like a Persian, and favours a pea-green toga. I could not help saying to him that in Greece artists took pains to dress like everybody but to paint like no one.

Last night I supped with Maecenas at his house on the Esquiline. Let me do justice to my host and give praise where praise is due; here are no jarring notes and no foolish display. Maecenas has exquisite taste; his house is not overcrowded with ornaments nor overwhelmed by useless decoration. By a cunning instinct he has realized that art should be the servant of necessity. Everything in his house has a use and a purpose; but where a vase, a bowl, a cup, a chair, or seat is needed, there you will find a beautiful vase, a beautiful bowl, and so forth.

Maecenas himself is bald, genial, and cultivated; he looks older than he is, and dresses with a very

slight affectation of coxcombry; his manner is a triumph of the art which conceals art. He talks to you as though you were the one person in the world he had been anxious to see, and as if the topic you were discussing were the preponderating interest of his life. As I entered his hall I found him pacing up and down in eager conversation with Agrippa, the famous admiral; my ears are sharp, and I just caught a fragment of their conversation, which happened to concern the new drains of Rome. Yet as Maecenas approached me he greeted me with effusion, and turning to Agrippa he said: "Ah, here he is," as if their whole talk had been of me.

We reclined almost immediately. The fare was delicious, and distinguished by the same supreme simplicity and excellence as the architecture and the ornamentation of his dwelling. There were many celebrities present besides Agrippa—Ludius the painter, most grotesquely clothed, several officials and politicians, Cinna, Grosphus, three minor poets, Horatius Flaccus, Propertius and Crassus; Ovidius Naso, the fashionable writer; Vergilius, the poet, and many young men whose names escape me. Naso is by far the most prominent figure in the Roman literary world at

present. He is the arbiter of taste, and sets the criterion of what is to be admired or not. Heaven forbid that I should read his verse, but there is no doubt about the flavour of his conversation, which is more interesting than his work.

The literary world despises Vergilius (the only Roman poet at present living worthy of the name!); on the other hand they admire this Crassus, who writes perfectly unintelligible odes about topics barren of interest. He has invented a novel style of writing, which is called symbolism. It consists of doing this: If you are writing about a tree and the tree seems to you to have the shape of an elephant you call it an elephant. Hence a certain chaos is produced in the mind of the reader, which these young men seem to find delectable. If you mention Vergilius to them they say: "If he only knew how to write. His ideas are good, but he has no sense of form, no ear for melody, and no power of expression."

This, of course, is ridiculous; for although Vergilius is a writer who has no originality, his style is felicitous, delicate, and lofty, and often musical. In fact he writes really well. With regard to the other poets, they are of little or no account. Horatius Flaccus has a happy knack of translation;

Propertius writes amiable, sentimental stuff, and Tibullus babbles of pastures; but they are all of them decadent in that they, none of them, have anything to say. And they either display a false simplicity and a false archaism, or else they are slavishly imitative or hopelessly obscure.

At first the conversation turned on naval matters. It was debated at some length whether the Romans needed a fleet at all, and, if they did, whether it should be a small fleet composed of huge triremes or a large fleet of smaller and swifter vessels. Agrippa, who has the great advantage of practical experience in naval warfare, was in favour of the latter type of vessel. But another sailor, a friend of Cinna's, who was present, and who was also experienced, said that the day of small vessels was over. The conversation then veered to literary matters.

Ovidius—a little man with twinkling eyes, carefully curled hair, and elaborately elegant clothes—he has his linen washed at Athens—excelled himself in affable courtesy and compliment to Crassus, whom he had never met hitherto. He had always been so anxious, he said, to meet the author of odes that were so interesting, although they were to him a little difficult.

"I'm afraid you must be deeply disappointed," said Crassus, blushing—he is a shy, overgrown youth with an immense tuft of tangled hair and a desperately earnest face.

"No," said Ovidius, "I am never disappointed in men of letters. I always think they are the most charming people in the world. It is their works which I find so disappointing. Everybody writes too much," he continued, "and, what is worse still, everybody writes. Even the dear Emperor writes hexameters; they do not always scan, but they are hexameters for all that. It has even been hinted that he has written a tragedy. Of course it doesn't matter how much verse a young man writes as long as he burns it all, but our dear Master's hexameters are preserved by the Empress. She told me herself with pride that she often 'mends' his verses for him. And they need mending sadly, because so many stitches in them are dropped. But how delightful it is to have a literary Emperor. He was good enough to ask me to read him a little poetry the other day. I did so. I chose the passage from the 'Iliad' where Hector says farewell to Andromache. He said it was very fine but a little old-fashioned. I then recited an ode of Sappho's, perhaps the loveliest of all of them. He seemed to

enjoy it, but said that it was not nearly as good as the original, and that he preferred that kind of song when it was set to music. What the 'original' might be to which he alluded I did not ask, as I have always held that a monarch's business is to have a superficial knowledge of everything but a thorough knowledge of nothing. And therefore I say it is an excellent thing, Vergilius, that our dear Emperor is aware that you and Crassus and myself all write verse. But it would be in the highest degree undesirable that he should know so much about the business as to command you to write verses of society, and myself to write a Georgic.

"But, you will say, he is a poet himself, and the Empress mends his verses. It is true she mends his verses, but she also mends his socks, and a sensible monarch no more bothers to write his own verse than he bothers to make his own socks, or else what would be the use of being a monarch? But, again, you will object: if they are written for him, why don't they scan? The answer is simple. The man who makes them knows his business, and he knows that if they did scan nobody would believe that our dear Master had written them.

"And in having his verse written for him by a professional, and a bad professional—I hope,

Horatius, it is not you, by the way—the Emperor displays not only sense but a rare wisdom. For a gentleman should never bother to acquire technical skill. If he loves music let him hire professional flute-players, but do not let him waste his time in practising ineffectual scales; and if he wants poetry let him order of Vergilius an epic, and if he wishes to pose as a literary monarch let him employ our friend Horatius to write him a few verses without sense or scansion—although I am afraid Horatius would find this difficult. You are too correct, Horatius. That is your fault and mine. We write verse so correctly that I sometimes think that in the far distant future, when the barbarians shall have conquered us, we shall be held up as models somewhere in Scythia or Thule by pedagogues to the barbarian children of future generations! Horrible thought! When Rome falls may our language and our literature perish with us. May we be utterly forgotten. My verse at least shall escape the pedagogues, for it is licentious; and yours, Crassus, I fear they will scarcely understand across the centuries. But, O Vergilius, the spirit of your poetry, so noble and so pure, is the very thing to be turned into a bed of Procrustes for little Dacians!"

"You are unfair on the Emperor," said Vergilius, "he has excellent taste."

"In poets certainly," said Ovidius, "but not in poetry."

The conversation then turned to other topics: the games, the new drains, the theatre of Balbus, the Naumachia, and the debated question whether the Emperor was right in having caused Vedius Pollio's crystal beakers to be broken because the latter had condemned a slave, who had accidentally dropped one of them, to be thrown into his pond of lampreys and eaten. The sentence would have been carried out had not the Emperor interfered and caused the slave to be released. Horatius said that Vedius Pollio deserved to be eaten by lampreys himself, but Ovidius and Ludius considered the punishment to be out of all proportion to the crime. Agrippa could not understand his minding the goblet being broken, as there were plenty of goblets in the world. Vergilius thought that Pollio's act was monstrous. Cinna said that the slave was his own. Maecenas considered that although it was a reprehensible act (and such deeds created dangerous precedents) nobody but a collector knew how terribly severe the punishment was.

We sat talking till late in the night. I cannot

write any more, but I have just heard a piece of startling news. Ovidius Naso has been banished *for life* to some barbarous spot near Tauris. The reason of his disgrace is unknown. Hail!

THE CAPREAE REGATTA,

A.D. 27

Letter from Sabina to Chloe

CAPREAE, *August.*

We arrived late the night before last from Rome, and never have I seen Capreae so crowded. There are hundreds of yachts here, and many from Egypt, Greece, and Asia, and the whole fleet has arrived, and is drawn up ready for inspection. Clothes are, of course, a difficulty, because one is expected to be elegant, and if one wears anything beautiful it is certain to be spoilt when one gets in and out of boats. Clodia looks too absurd in Egyptian silks and gold chains, just as if she were going to the Games, and Lesbia looks sillier still dressed up as a Greek sailor boy. I have tried to steer a middle course between the two extremes, and I have got a plain white peplum with brown sandals; this all looks cool and summer-like, but it is really substantial enough for the fickle, breezy weather.

Yesterday we went with Sejanus to be shown over one of the ships, the *Servius Tullius*. It was one of the new kind, with three decks and four of what they call turrets. The officers on board were very proud of themselves because in their "battering practice," which they had just been doing in some outlandish place, they had successfully destroyed the *boom* (which is a kind of mast sticking out from the ship) of the dummy ship on which they practise. Julius says that these experiments are a waste of money, because each of these dummy ships costs I don't know how much money. But then Julius is a Little Roman, and I always tell him that if everybody thought as he did, we should have the barbarians in Rome in no time.

The officers have such a hard life on board. They have to get up before sunrise, and if any of them is at all disobedient he is told to climb up the mast and sit in a kind of basket for several hours with nothing to do. As for the sailors, they live in a dark hole with scarcely any light in it and no air at all. I asked one of them whether this didn't give them a headache, and he said that some clever mathematician had invented a kind of fan which buzzed round and round so as to ventilate their cabin. He said this was a horrible invention, and

made such a draught that nobody could sleep. If you live at sea, he told me, you want to be warm in your cabin. You have quite enough fresh air on deck. Julius said this showed how perverse and conservative sailors are. If he was the captain of a ship he would make the sailors sleep on deck in hammocks without any blankets. The sailor said they were all thankful Julius was a politician and not a sailor. And Julius, who has no sense of humour, thought it was meant as a compliment.

There have been heaps of visitors on board all the ships. The captain of the *Servius Tullius* said it was wonderful what an interest people took in the fleet now, and what intelligent questions they asked, especially the women. I was rather flattered by this, as I have always taken an intelligent interest in naval things, and I had only just said to him (to show I wasn't ignorant) that my favourite boat was a *spinnaker*.

To-morrow there are going to be some races. I am going to try to get Lucius Aemilius to take me on board his schooner, the *Hirundo*. I always think a schooner is a safer boat than a cutter. I don't really like racing, because nobody will talk to one, and the men are all so rude and absent-minded while the race is going on, and

whatever one does one is always in the way and in the wrong place, but I shall get rid of Julius for a whole day, because he is a very bad sailor and nothing would drag him on board a racing yacht.

Capreae is terribly crowded. I was invited upon Sejanus' yacht, but I think it much more comfortable to live in the most uncomfortable villa than in the most comfortable yacht. There is no privacy in a yacht, and salt water ruins my skin. Our villa, which we have hired for the week, is quite clean, only there is only one bath in it, so that we all have to use it by turn.

Vitellius, the admiral, has put one of the little pinnaces belonging to his ship, the *Remus*, at our disposal. So we can go backwards and forwards whenever we like. The pinnace is managed by one of the quite young officers—such a nice little boy, and so willing! He doesn't mind how long I keep him waiting at the pier. It seems extraordinary that such young boys should be able to manage a whole boat full of men, doesn't it? Ours looks about fifteen years old, but I suppose he is really much older. I asked him to come and dine with us, and Julius was cross about it, and said I was making myself ridiculous by talking to children.

But I promise you this boy has much more assurance than many grown-up men. In fact, once or twice I have had to speak severely to him because he was on the point of going too far. As it was, I treated it all as a joke, and told him I was old enough to be his mother.

There have been a lot of the "Lysistratists" here—you know, the women who are in favour of senators being all women. Of course, I have nothing against their principles. If a man is a senator why shouldn't a woman be? Any woman is cleverer than any man. But I do think their methods are silly and so *unwomanly*. One of them took a piece of chalk and wrote "Women and Freedom" on Sejanus' carpet. And another dressed herself up as a Numidian slave, and shouted "Justice for Women" just as he was in the middle of a serious speech at his banquet. But the sailors like them very much, because they are so graceful, and on board one of the ships of the fleet—I think it was the *Scipio*—one of the chief "Lysistratists," Camilla, entirely converted one of the men of the "Legio classica"—those kind of half-soldiers, half-sailors, who keep order on board the ships—and he is now a fervent "Lysistratist" himself. The other sailors say this is very curious, as the man in

question had such a stern character. But then, you see, Camilla is quite charming. Sejanus is horribly put out about it, and his house has to be guarded day and night by soldiers. It is most inconvenient, because the other day his own daughter Lydia was arrested as she was going into the house. They had mistaken her for a "Lysistratist."

Last night all the ships were illuminated with oil lamps, and ten thousand Egyptian slaves danced and sang in the gardens. The result was I did not get a wink of sleep, and the worst of it is that these songs and dances go on all day as well as all night. On the beach, too, there is every kind of acrobat, gipsy tumblers, and fortune-tellers. There is a woman here who tells one marvellous things by looking at one's hand, only Julius, who, like all husbands, is now and then quite unaccountably obstinate about little things, absolutely forbade me to consult her, and so I had to give it up. She told Clodia she would be married three times.

The Persian fleet arrives here to-morrow on a visit. Julius and I are invited to dine at the Emperor's villa, and Julius has to wear a Persian uniform as a compliment to the Persians. It is made of scarlet silk with orange sleeves, and a long

green train fringed with silver; he also has to wear a high tiara of steel and gold covered with jewels, and extraordinary sandals laced up the leg with little bells. He tried it on last night, and I can't tell you what he looked like. (Julius has grown to look much older since you saw him, and only the soberest togas suit him.) I couldn't help telling him he looked like a circus-rider, and he was so offended that I have not been able to mention the dinner since. Men are so funny. Julius is ashamed of being thought a clever politician, which he is, and wants to be thought an excellent quoit-player, and he can't throw a quoit a yard. He stoops and he is flabby, and yet he wants everybody to take him for an athlete!

How different from those nice sailors, who are so modest, and who are pleased because they are sailors, and wouldn't be anything else for the world.

I must stop now, because the pinnace is "awaiting my pleasure," and I don't want to keep my little sailor boy waiting. Farewell. I will write again soon.

P.S.—Whenever Julius is bad-tempered now I say I wish I had married a sailor, because they are

never, never, never rude to their wives. It is true, of course, that they seldom see them, but I did not say that.

P.P.S.—Later. We dined at the Emperor's villa last night. It appears that this morning a tiresome incident occurred. A fisherman brought the Emperor some lobsters, and it turned out that one of them was not quite fresh. So the Emperor had the fisherman hurled from the cliff into the sea. He is subject every now and then to these fits of petulance; but I must say he was charming last night, and most agreeable. Of course he is self-conscious and he makes some people feel shy; but I get on with him beautifully. He knows so much about everybody. We fancy he already knew that Metellus has quite given up Clodia, and is now desperately in love with Irene. He was most tactful with me, and never alluded either to Sejanus or to Julius.

MESSALINA

Letter from Pallas, Librarian to the Emperor Claudius, to a friend

THE PALATINE, ROME

A slave brought your letter this morning from Antium, and since the Emperor is sending one back to-morrow I take advantage of the opportunity to obey your behest and to give you the news which you ask for.

You demand a full account of my new life, and although it is now only three weeks ago that I arrived, I feel as if many years had passed, so crowded have they been with incident, experience, and even tragedy. I will not anticipate, but will begin at the beginning.

As soon as my appointment was settled I was commanded to come to the Palace and to take up my new duties at once. I arrived early one morning about three weeks ago. I was shown the room I was to occupy, and the library where I was to

work—which is magnificent—and briefly instructed in my duties, which are not heavy. I was to have my meals with the Emperor's Secretaries.

The first day of my arrival I saw no one, but the second morning, just after I had settled down to my work—I have two assistants—a man walked into the library and asked in a hesitating manner for a Greek dictionary.

"I am sorry to trouble you," he added, apologetically, "but I am a wretched speller."

I became aware—why exactly I cannot tell, since he was dressed in a loose robe and slippers—that it was the Emperor. He looked at me furtively, fixing his glance on the edge of my toga, so much so that I began to think it must be dirty. He is badly made, his head looks as if it might fall off his shoulders, his features are too big for his face, and his hand shakes. In spite of all this there is about him a mournful dignity—an air of intelligence, melancholy, and authority. I gave him the dictionary and he looked out the word he wanted, but my presence seemed to embarrass him, and he fumbled, and was a long time before he could find what he was seeking. At last he found it and returned me the book with a nervous cough. As he left the room he asked me to dine with him

that night. It would be quite informal, he said, only himself and the Empress.

I looked forward to the evening with fear and curiosity, and when at the appointed hour I found myself in the ante-room I was trembling with nervousness. Presently the Emperor entered the room and said the Empress would be down directly. He seemed to be as shy as I was myself. After a prolonged silence he remarked that the month of October, which had just begun, was the pleasantest month in the year. After this he bade me be seated, relapsed into silence, and did not seem to notice my presence. He stared at the ceiling and seemed to be engrossed in his thoughts. Nearly twenty minutes passed in uncomfortable silence, and then the Empress entered with a jingle of chains and bangles. She smiled on me graciously, and we went into the dining room.

I had heard much about the beauty of the Empress, and the accounts were scarcely exaggerated. Her face was childish and flower-like, her hair and complexion dazzlingly fair, her smile radiant, her expression guileless and innocent, and in her brown eyes there danced a bright and delightful mischief.

We reclined, and course after course of rich and

spicy dishes were brought. We began with sturgeon and fried eels, followed by roast sucking-pig, wild boar, calf, wild peacock, turkey, and various kinds of game. The Emperor helped himself copiously and partook twice of every course. The Empress toyed with her food and sipped a little boiling water out of a cup. The Emperor did not speak at all, but the Empress kept up a running conversation on the topics of the day—the games, the new port of Ostia, the Emperor's new improved alphabet, and the progress of the History of Etruria, which he is writing in Greek.

"You will be a great help to him," she said, talking as if he were not present. "There is nobody at all literary at Court just now, and he loves talking about literature. I am so anxious he should go on with his writing—you must encourage him. I do what I can, but I am not up to his scholarship and science; I am only an ignorant woman."

Towards the end of dinner, Britain having been mentioned, the Emperor discoursed at length on the native religion of that insignificant island. The people there, he said, held the oak tree in great reverence and sacrificed to a god who had certain affinities with the Etrurian Moon-god; he intended to devote a chapter of his Etrurian history to a

comparison between the two religions; and he explained at enormous length, and with a wealth of illustration which revealed untold erudition, their likenesses and differences.

The Empress sat in rapt attention, drinking in every word, and when he had finished she said: "Isn't he wonderful?" He looked at her and blushed, as pleased as a child at the praise.

When at last the long meal came to an end the Emperor took us to his private study and showed me his books, almost all of which, dealt with history and philosophy. He pulled down many of them from their shelves, and discoursed learnedly about them, but the Empress always brought the conversation back to his own writings, and insisted on his reading out passages of the History of Carthage. (This I had to fetch from the library.)

"You must read us my favourite bit about the death of Hannibal," she said.

The Emperor complied with her wishes, and read out in an expressionless voice a narrative of the death of the Carthaginian hero, which I confess was not distinguished either by originality of thought or elegance of diction. It was, to tell the truth, tedious and interlarded with many moral reflections of a somewhat trite order on the vanity of human

achievement. But during all the time he read, the Empress sat opposite him with an expression of rapt interest, and at the more pathetic passages tears came into her eyes. By the peroration on Hannibal's character, which said that he was a great man but a victim of ambition, and that in contemplating so great an elevation and so miserable an end man could not fail to be impressed, she was especially moved. When it was finished she made him repeat some verses which he had written about the death of Dido. The Emperor showed reluctance to do this, but she finally persuaded him, saying that people might say what they liked, but that she greatly preferred his verse to that of Vergil. It was more human and more manly. In Vergil, she said, there was always a note of effeminacy. I could not agree with her there, but her admiration for her husband's work was deeply touching in its sincerity.

"If only he had more time to himself," she said wistfully, "he would write a magnificent epic—but he is a slave to his duty."

The Emperor then mentioned that he was starting for Ostia in a few days. The Empress put on a pained expression, and said it was too cruel of him not to take her with him. He explained that he would willingly have done so, but as his time there

would be entirely devoted to formal business he was sure she would be more happy at Rome. She then asked him if he had any objection to her organizing a little ceremony for the Festival of Bacchus during his absence. Silius had promised to help her. They had even thought of performing a little play, quite privately, of course, in the gardens, just for a few friends.

The Emperor smiled and said he had no objection, only he begged her to see that etiquette was observed and that the guests should not be allowed to take any liberties. "The Empress is so good-natured," he said, "and people take advantage of her good nature and her high spirits, and the Romans, especially the matrons, are so spiteful." He had, of course, no objection to a little fun, and he wanted her above all things to enjoy herself.

At that moment Narcissus, the freedman, entered with some papers for the Emperor to sign. The Emperor glanced through them, signed most of them, but paused at one.

"I thought," he said, and then hesitated and coughed, "that we had settled to pardon them."

"There was an idea of it at first," said Narcissus, "but you afterwards, if you remember, agreed that it was necessary to make an example in this case."

"Yes, yes," answered the Emperor.

"Are you talking of Verus and Antonius?" the Empress broke in. "You promised me that they would be pardoned."

"So I did," said the Emperor, and then, turning to Narcissus, he said: "I think in this case, in view of the rather exceptional circumstances, we might strain a point."

"But they are quite undeserving," began Narcissus.

"The Emperor has pardoned them," broke in the Empress, "he told me so yesterday; let us scratch out their names," and bending over the Emperor with a kind and lovely smile, she suited the action to the word. The Emperor smiled lovingly at her, and Narcissus withdrew, biting his lips. Soon after that I withdrew also.

The next morning the Emperor started for Ostia. During the week that followed the Empress visited me frequently in the library, and was extremely kind; she took an extraordinary interest in my work, and revealed a wide knowledge of literature. Her criticisms were always acute. She evidently missed the Emperor very much. The more I saw of her the more I admired her beauty, her kindness, and her wit, and the more readily I under-

stood the jealousy she inspired at Rome, a jealousy which found vent in spiteful gossip and malicious scandal.

The Empress, I at once understood, was a creature compact of kindness, gaiety, and impulse; she could not understand nor brook the conventions and the hypocrisy of the world. She was a child of nature, unsophisticated and unspoilt by the artifices of society. This is the one thing the world can never forgive. When she was pleased she showed it. Her spirits were unbounded, and she delighted in every kind of frolic and fun, and was sometimes imprudent in giving rein to her happy disposition and to the charming gaiety of her nature in public. This did her harm and gave her enemies a pretext for inventing the wildest and most absurd calumnies. But when she heard of this she only laughed and said that the malice of her enemies would only recoil on their own heads.

Alas! she was grievously mistaken. Her enemies were far more numerous and more bitter than she supposed; moreover, they resented the influence she exerted over her husband, just because this influence was gentle and good. Here are the bare facts of what happened. The Emperor was still at Ostia. The Empress was celebrating the Festival of Bac-

chus in the Palatine Gardens according to the Emperor's wish. The feast lasted several days. Silius and Veltius Valens, who are both skilled at that sort of thing, had arranged an effective amphitheatre, and there were dances, music, and a whole pageant in honour of Bacchus. It was a lovely sight.

On the last day of the festival a procession of Bacchanals, clad in leopard skins and crowned with vine leaves, danced round the altar playing the double flute. One day on the stage in the amphitheatre a wine-press was revealed, and a chorus of wine-harvesters led by the Empress herself trod the grapes. Never had the Empress looked so beautiful as in this Bacchanal's dress, and she joined in the fun with a wild, irresponsible gaiety and enjoyed herself like a child. During the whole festival, which had lasted a week, she had played a thousand pranks, and on the first day of the merry-makings Silius had dressed up as Bacchus, and the Empress as Ariadne, and they acted a play in which a mock marriage ceremony had been performed—all this in fun, of course.

But there were spies among us, and Narcissus, who was at Ostia, received daily accounts of what was happening. Skilfully he distorted the facts and

represented what had been a piece of harmless fun as a scandalous orgy. He said the Empress, clad only in a vine-wreath, had danced before all Rome, and that she had publicly wedded Silius. He added a whole list of infamous details which were the fruits of his jealous fancy; but, worst of all, he accused Silius and the Empress of conspiracy, and said that they had attempted to bribe the Praetorian Guards, that they were plotting to kill Claudius and usurp the Throne. The festival was not over when a slave arrived breathless, and told us what Narcissus had done. The Emperor, he said, was on his way home. The Empress knew she must meet him face to face. She also knew that Narcissus would do everything in his power to prevent it. The courtiers, scenting the Empress's overthrow, deserted her, and she set out on foot to meet the Emperor. But Narcissus prevented the meeting, and the Empress fled to Lucullus' Villa, which Valerius Asiaticus had bequeathed to her.

The Emperor arrived in time for dinner. I was summoned to his table. He partook heartily of eight courses almost in silence, but seemed gloomy and depressed. After dinner his spirits rose and he asked whether I considered that Silius and the Empress had really plotted against him. I told him

the whole truth, and he expressed great annoyance at Narcissus' perfidy. He sent a message to say that the Empress was to return at once—to be judged, he added cunningly, for he did not wish Narcissus to know that he knew the truth. But Narcissus divined his peril. He knew that as soon as the Empress returned his doom would be sealed, and he told the tribune on duty that the Emperor had ordered Messalina to be killed.

That evening I was bidden to supper; and before we had finished the Emperor asked why Messalina had not come.

"Messalina," said Narcissus, "is no more. She perished by her own hand."

The Emperor made no comment, but told the slave to fill his goblet. He finished supper in silence.

The next morning the Emperor came into the library. He asked for his own Carthaginian history, and sat by the window, looking at it without reading. Then he beckoned to me, and finding the passage on the death of Hannibal, he pointed to it and tried to say something.

"She"—he began, but two large tears rolled down his cheeks, and he choked. Since then he has never mentioned Messalina; he works, eats,

and talks like a man whose spirit is elsewhere, or a person who is walking in his sleep.

Farewell, I can write no more, for I am shattered by this tragedy and the dreadful end of one of the few really good women I have ever seen.

NERO INTERVIEWED

ROME, A.D. 64

Letter from a Greek Traveller to his friend in Athens

It is fifteen years since I was last at Rome, and although I was prepared to find a change in everything, I had not expected this complete transformation. The Rome I knew, the Rome of the straggly narrow streets and rotting wooden houses, has disappeared, and in its place there is a kind of Corinth on a huge scale, marred of course by the usual want of taste of the Romans, but imposing nevertheless and extraordinarily gay and brilliant. The fault of the whole thing is that it is too big: the houses are too high, the streets too broad, everything is planned on too large a scale. From the artist's point of view the effect is deplorable; from the point of view of the casual observer it is amusing in the highest degree. The broad streets—a blaze of coloured marble and fresh paint—are now crowded with brilliant shops where you see all that is new from Greece and the East, together with

curiosities from the North and the barbarian countries. Everybody seems to be spending money. The shops are crowded from morning till night. The display of gold trinkets, glass vases, carpets, rugs, silks, gold and silver tissues, embroideries, all glittering in the sunlight, dazzles the eye and imposes by the mass and glare of colour and gaudiness.

There is no doubt that the Emperor is extraordinarily popular, and whenever he shows himself in public he is greeted with frantic enthusiasm. Of course there are some mal-contents among the old-fashioned Liberals, but they have no influence whatever and count practically for nothing, for what are their grumblings and their eternal lamentations about the good old times and the Empire going to the dogs, in the scale with the hard solid fact that ever since Nero came to the throne the prosperity of the Empire has increased in every possible respect? For the first time for years the individual has been able to breathe freely, and owing to the splendid reforms which he has carried through in the matter of taxation, an intolerable load of oppression has been lifted from the shoulders of the poor, and I can assure you they are grateful.

A few nights ago I had dinner with Seneca, to

meet some of the leading literary lights. He is somewhat aged. Discussing various differences between our people and his, Seneca said that it is all very well for us to talk of our intellectual superiority, our artistic taste, our wit, our sense of proportion, but we had no idea either of liberty of trade on the one side, or liberty of thought on the other. "That kind of liberty," said Seneca, "always fares better under a King or a Prince of some kind than under jealous democrats. We should never tolerate the religious tyranny of Athens." I could not help pointing out that what struck me at Rome to-day was that whereas almost everybody had "literary" pretensions, and discussed nothing but eloquence, form, style, and "artistry," nearly everybody wrote badly with the exception of Petronius Arbiter, whom the literary world does not recognize. The Romans talk a great deal of "art for art's sake," and language, instead of being the simple and perfect vesture of thought, is cultivated for its own sake. "This seems to us Greeks," I said, "the cardinal principle of decadence, and the contrary of our ideal which is that everything should serve to adorn, but all that is dragged in merely for the sake of ornament is bad." I think Seneca agreed, but the

younger literary men present smiled with pitying condescension on me and said patronizingly: "We've got beyond all that."

After that dinner I made up my mind that I had seen enough of the literary set. Seneca was kind enough to get me an audience with the Emperor. I was received yesterday afternoon in the new gold palace which Nero has built for himself. It is a sumptuous building, to our taste vulgar, but not unimposing, and suits its purpose very well, though all his *suite* complain of the insufficient accommodation and the discomfort of the arrangements. I was taken into a kind of ante-room where a number of Court officials, both civil and military, were waiting, and I was told that the Emperor would probably see me in about a quarter of an hour. They all talked for some time in subdued tones as if they were in a temple; as far as I could see there was no reason for this as the Emperor's room was at the other end of a long passage, and the doors were shut. At the end of a quarter of an hour a young officer fetched me and ushered me into the Emperor's presence.

He was seated at a large table covered with documents and parchments of every description, and had evidently been dictating to his secretary,

who left the room on the other side as I entered. He is very like his pictures, which, however, do not give one any idea of his short-sighted, dreamy eyes, nor of his intensely good-humoured and humorous expression. He has a kind of way of looking up at one in a half-appealing fashion, as much as to say "For Heaven's sake don't think that I take all this business seriously." His movements are quick but not jerky. He held in his hand a chain of amber beads which he kept on absent-mindedly fingering during the whole interview. His fingers are short, square, and rather fat. He spoke Greek, which he speaks very purely indeed and without any Latin accent. Indeed, he speaks it too well. He asked me whether I was enjoying my visit to Rome, how long it was since I had been here, what I thought of the improvements, and if I had been to the new theatre. I said I had not been to the theatre, but that I was told the games in the Circus were extremely well worth seeing. The Emperor laughed and shrugged his shoulders, and said that it was very civil of me to say so, since I knew quite well that those spectacles, although hugely enjoyed by the ignorant rabble, were singularly tedious to people of taste and education like myself. I bowed as he made this compliment. As for him-

self, he continued, the games frankly bored him to death, but, of course, it was a State duty for him to attend them. "It is part of my profession," he said, "but if I had my own way I should witness nothing but Greek plays acted by my own company in my own house." He asked after several of my relatives whom he had met in Greece, remembering their exact names and occupations. He asked me if I had been writing anything lately, and when I said that I was sick of books and intended henceforth to devote all my leisure to seeing people and studying them, he laughed. "Nothing is so discouraging," he said, "as trying to improve the literary taste in this city. We are an admirable people; we do a great many things much better than other people—I do not mean only our colonization"—he said smiling—"and our foreign trade, but our portrait painting and our popular farce. But as a general rule directly we touch Art we seem to go altogether wrong, and the result is nauseous. Therefore, if you want to find a Roman who will be thoroughly sympathetic, capable, and intelligent, and decent, choose one who knows nothing about Art and does not want to. With you it is different," he added, "Athens is a city of artists." He then changed the subject and referred

to the rather bitter criticisms published at Athens about his policy with regard to the Jews, especially that new sect among them who called themselves Christians.

"Of course," he said, "your sense of proportion is shocked when any extreme measures are adopted, but, believe me, in this case it is necessary. The Jews are everywhere, and everywhere they claim the rights of citizenship. But they do not live as citizens: they retain their peculiar status; they claim the rights of the citizen and exceptional privileges of their own—in fact, their own laws. They wish to have the advantages of nationality without being a nation, without taking part in the functions of the State. We cannot tolerate this. The whole matter has been brought to the fore by the attitude of these so-called Christians, who are, I am obliged to say, extremely difficult to deal with: In the first place because they adopt the policy of passive resistance, against which it is so difficult to act, and in the second place because they are getting the women on their side—and you know what that means. I have no personal objection either to Jews or Christians. What one can't tolerate is a secret society within the State which advocates and preaches neglect of the

citizen's duty to the State, the worthlessness of patriotism, and the utter non-existence of citizenship."

I said I quite understood this, but did not his Majesty agree with me in thinking that penal oppressions were rarely successful, and frequently defeated their own object.

The Emperor replied that there was a great deal in what I said, but that he did not consider he was dealing with a national or universal movement, which had any element of duration in it, but with a particular fad which would soon pass out of fashion, as the majority of all sensible people were opposed to it.

"The unfortunate part is," he said, "the women have got it into their heads that it is a fine thing, and of course the more they see it is opposed to the wishes of all sensible men the more obstinate they will be in sticking to it. The whole matter has been grossly exaggerated both as regards the nature of the movement and the nature of the measures taken against it; but that one cannot help. They have represented me as gloating over the sufferings of innocent victims. That is all stuff and nonsense. Great care has been taken to investigate all the cases which have arisen, so that the innocent should not suffer

with the guilty. Besides which, any Jew or Christian who is willing to make a purely formal acknowledgement of the state authorities is entirely exempt from any possibility of persecution. But this is precisely what they often obstinately refuse to do—why, I cannot conceive. There is also a great deal of hysteria in the matter, and a large amount of self-advertisement, but one cannot get over the fact that the movement is a revolutionary one in itself, and can only be dealt with as such. I doubt whether in any country a revolutionary movement which has taken so uncompromising an attitude has ever been dealt with in so merciful a manner. So you see," the Emperor concluded, "how grossly unfair is the manner in which I have been treated in this matter. However, I suppose I can't complain: whatever one does it is sure to be wrong."

He then rose from his table and said that the Empress wished to see me before I went away, and he led me into her apartment, which was next door.

The Empress Sabina Poppaea is the perfection of grace; she is more like a Greek than a Roman, and speaks Greek better than the Emperor, using the language not only with purity but with elegance.

All the stories we were told of her extravagance in dress and of how she powdered her head with gold, are of course absurd. She was dressed with the utmost simplicity and did not wear a single ornament. She was absolutely natural, put one at one's ease, talking continuously herself on various topics without ever dwelling long on one, till she had said all she had got to say, and then by a gesture delicately shadowed, she gave me the sign that it was time for me to go.

The Emperor said that the Empress Mother would have seen me only she was suffering from one of her bad attacks of indigestion. He told me to be sure to let him know should I visit Rome again, that he hoped himself to be able to spend some months in Greece next year, but he did not think the pressure of affairs would allow him to. Farewell.

P.S.—Later. The gossips say that the Empress Mother is being poisoned.

MARCUS AURELIUS AT LANUVIUM

Letter from Celsus to Lucian

I arrived at Lanuvium last night. The Court are here for the summer; that is to say, the Emperor, the Empress, the Heir Apparent, and the Emperor's nephew, Ummidius Quadratus, and the Senator who is on duty. As soon as I arrived I was taken by Eclectus, the Chamberlain, to my apartments, which are small, but from which one obtains a beautiful view of the Alban Hills. I was told that I would be expected to come to supper, and that I must take care not to be late, as the Emperor was punctual to a minute, and the water clocks in the villa were purposely an hour fast according to ordinary time.

A few minutes before the hour of supper a slave was sent to fetch me, and I was ushered into a large room, opening on to a portico from whence you have a gorgeous view of the whole country,

where the Emperor and his family meet before going into the dining-room.

I had never seen the Emperor before. He is short and looks delicate and a great deal older than he really is. His eyes have a weary expression, and the general impression of the man would be one of great benevolence and dignity were it not marred by a certain stiffness and primness in his demeanour. When he greets you with great affability, you say to yourself, "What a charming man!" Then he stops short, and it is difficult, nay, impossible, to continue the conversation. After a prolonged pause he asks you a question or makes some remark on the weather or the topics of the day. But he does not pursue the subject, and the result is a succession of awkward pauses and a general atmosphere of discomfort.

Whether it be from the reserve which at once strikes you as being the most salient feature of his character, or whether it be from the primness and the slight touch of pedantry which are the result of the peculiar way in which he was brought up, there is a certain lack, not of dignity, indeed, but of impressiveness in the man. He strikes you more as a dignified man than as a dignified monarch. Indeed, were I to meet Marcus Aurelius in

the streets of Rome or Athens, dressed as a simple mortal, I should be inclined to take him for a barber who catered for the aristocracy. As it was, when I was first introduced into that ante-room and saw the Emperor for the first time, a wild longing rose in me to say to him, "I will be shaved at half-past eight to-morrow morning."

The Empress Faustina is quite unlike what I had expected. There is no trace of Imperial or any other kind of dignity about her. She is not very tall; she has a delicate nose, slightly turned up, laughing eyes which will surely remain eternally young, and masses of thick, curly fair hair. I had imagined from the pictures and effigies of her that she was dark; possibly she may have dyed it lately, but I do not think so. She is restless in her movements; she is never still, but is always on the move, and one has the impression that she is longing to, and would if she dared, skip and jump about the room like a child. As it is, her arms, and especially her hands, are never for a moment still, and her eyes shift quickly from one person to another, smiling and laughing. She made one feel that she was trying the whole time to be on her best behaviour, to curb her spirits, and not to overstep the bounds in any way, nor to do

anything which would displease the Emperor or offend his sense of etiquette and decorum.

We waited four or five minutes for the Heir Apparent, who was late. The Emperor remarked with some acidity to the Empress that if Commodus could not learn to be punctual he had better have his meals in his own villa with his tutor. The Empress said that the poor boy was given such long lessons and so many of them that he scarcely had time even to dress; that he was overworked and a martyr to discipline.

At that moment the "poor boy" entered the room. For a boy of sixteen he is enormous: very tall, large, and fat. He has dark hair, a low forehead, with a thick and rebellious tuft of hair growing over it, rather coarse features, and thick lips. He must be immensely strong, but although you could not find a greater contrast to his pale, prim, and dapper father, there is a strong family likeness, nevertheless. You see at once that he is a son of Marcus Aurelius. It is as though the gods had wished to play a huge joke, and had made in the son a caricature, on a large scale, of the father. It is as if one saw the caricature of the most delicate ivory statuette made in coarse clay. He was told to salute me, which he did somewhat awkwardly.

The Empress said: "You must excuse him; he is very shy."

Upon which I saw that he with difficulty suppressed a shout of laughter by stuffing his fist into his mouth, while his whole body was shaking.

The Emperor did not notice this. He led the way into the dining-room, and we all reclined.

At first there was a dead silence, and then Ummidius Quadratus, who seems to me far the most lively member of the family, said that the quails this year were much fatter than he had ever remembered them.

"Is that so?" said the Emperor. "The best quails I ever ate," he added, "were those we got near the Danube. Unfortunately, my physician does not allow me to touch meat."

After this, there was a prolonged silence, which was broken by the Empress saying she did not believe in doctors. "Whenever they are at a loss as to what to prescribe, they ask you what you are fond of eating, and tell you to stop eating it."

Commodus, as if to show his agreement with his mother's ideas, at that moment put almost an entire quail into his mouth, and choked in the process. His mother hit him on the back, and told

him to look up towards the ceiling. A slave brought him some water.

The Emperor frowned, and told him not to eat so fast.

"It is my habit," he said, "and a habit which you would do well to imitate, to count twenty-six between each mouthful."

But Commodus, who had turned purple in the face, merely went on choking, and this lasted several minutes.

The Emperor asked me a few questions about Athens, and what was being done and said and written in our city. I answered him as best I could, but he did not seem to take notice of my replies, and went on, as though he were a machine, to other topics and other questions. I spoke of you, and I mentioned your latest book, but he changed the subject as though it were distasteful to him. I suspect that your ideas are too frivolous for him, and may even shock him.

Then Commodus, having recovered from his choking fit, began to talk of a pugilistic match which was to take place in a neighbouring village. He described at great length the champions who were to take part in it, the chances and the odds, and entered into many technical details which were

tedious, and indeed quite incomprehensible to me. But the Emperor and the Empress listened with smiling and patronizing approval, and with obvious admiration of their son's knowledge. The Emperor is extremely conservative, and does all he can to encourage national sports and pastimes. He never misses a single event of importance at the Games, and even when he is in a country retreat like this, he patronizes the local efforts in which his son seems to play so prominent a part.

After this dissertation on pugilism, which seemed to me interminable, had come to an end, Commodus related how he had played a practical joke on one of the freedmen who had been looking on at the sports. It appears that the man, who was old and rather fat, had been on the point of sitting down, and Commodus had pulled the chair from under him and he had come heavily to the ground, much to the amusement of the bystanders.

The Emperor thought this extremely funny, and indeed I was not a little bewildered by the mixture of severity and lenience with which the boy seems to be treated, for when a little later he asked if he might have a new toga to wear during the daytime, as his present one was getting worn out, the Emperor said, in a tone which admitted

of no discussion, that it was quite out of the question; that boys should learn to be economical, and, as it was, he was a great deal too extravagant for his age, and already thought too much of such trifles. The Emperor said that his own toga was older than his son's, and yet he did not complain. It was certainly true that the Emperor seemed the perfection of neatness and tidiness, although it was obvious that his clothes were by no means new.

It was arranged that we should all go on a picnic on the lake next day and that I should be shown the country.

The Empress clapped her hands at the idea, and said there was nothing she enjoyed so much as a picnic. We should take our food with us and cook it ourselves. Commodus should catch us some fish and perhaps kill some game.

Commodus, for his part, looked sulky and sullen when this was mentioned; he evidently had some other plan in his mind. The Emperor said that he also found picnics a very pleasant relaxation; but a dismal expression came over the faces of the Chamberlain and of the few Court attendants who were present.

As I was most anxious to ascertain what was going on in the political world at this moment, I

hazarded a remark with regard to the recent disturbances at Lyons which have been caused by the Christians. The Emperor at once became chillingly formal, but did not decline to discuss the matter; in fact, he was evidently anxious that I should be in no doubt with regard to his ideas on the subject. He said that it had become necessary to take extreme measures, that the attitude of these fanatics was intolerable; that they were in the highest degree unpatriotic and were a positive danger to the State. He was, however, not going to tolerate this any longer; he had no patience with stubbornness, and had determined, once and for all, to put his foot down. Conciliatory measures had been tried and had proved a failure. There was not the slightest use in pandering to sentimentalism and hysteria. He said he had just drafted an edict ordering the authorities to take the very severest measures to overcome the obstinacy of the rebels, and that should these prove ineffectual they were to resort to wholesale capital punishment without further discrimination or delay.

The Empress said that the Christians were disgusting, and that such vermin ought to be stamped upon. I said that I could not conceive the attitude of the Christians. Personally I had taken some

trouble to ascertain what their doctrines were, and had interviewed several of the leading Christians in Greece and Asia. I agreed that Christianity was the national religion of no one; it was a religion adopted as a protest against the national religion by men who were infected by the spirit of all secret societies; that if the Christians refused to observe public ceremonies and to render homage to those who presided over them they should also, logically, give up wearing the *toga virilis*. But if they wished to share the benefit of civil life they should then pay the necessary honours to those who are charged with administration. But I added that should they do this I could not understand why their religion should not be tolerated on the same footing as other religions, such as that of the Egyptians, since nothing was required of them which was contrary to their principles.

The Emperor said that the Christians had already made such a thing impossible. "It is not," he said, "as if we had ever forced a pious man to commit an impious action or to say a shameful thing. He would be quite right in that case to endure any tortures rather than do so. But it is quite a different thing when a man is ordered to celebrate the Sun or to sing a beautiful hymn in

honour of Athene. These are merely outward forms of piety, and one cannot have too much piety."

Here Ummidius Quadratus broke in and said that the Christians argued that it was a matter which concerned their conscience, which was no business of the State, and that they were perfectly ready to fulfil any duties, either civil or military, which had no religious character.

The Empress said she did not know anything about the ideas of the Christians, but she did think it was a disgraceful thing that in the present enlightened age people should be allowed to cover children with flour, to massacre them, and eat them.

I said I did not think the Christians did this. But the Empress said she knew it was true; she had heard it on the best authority; in fact, her maid knew some one who had seen them do it.

Here Ummidius Quadratus observed that some people in the best society had become Christians, and that he had even heard that—and here he mentioned the niece of a well-known patrician whose name I have forgotten—was one of them.

The Emperor drew himself up as though some dreadful solecism had been committed, and told his

nephew that he had no right to say so shocking and so monstrous a thing at his table, especially before a stranger and a guest.

I will go on with my letter this evening, for a slave has just told me that we are to start for the picnic at once.

THE CAMELOT JOUSTS

Guinevere to King Arthur

CAMELOT, *Monday.*

Dearest Arthur,

I am feeling a little better. Merlin, who came over the other day from Broceliande, advised me to drink a glass of tepid water before breakfast every day and not to eat *brown* bread. This treatment has really done me good. I will see that everything is ready for the Jousts. They are getting on with the lists, but they have painted the outside paling red instead of green, which is very provoking. I think we must send the Under Seneschal away at Lady Day. He forgets everything.

I have asked Yniol to stay at the castle for the Jousts, and the Lord of Astolat and one of his sons. (We can't be expected to ask the whole family.) I thought it was no use asking poor little Elaine because she never goes anywhere now and hates the Jousts. Do you think we *must* ask Merlin this year? We asked him last year and I don't see that we need ask him *every* year. He

has become so cross and crotchety, and Vivien complained that when he was here last year he behaved disgracefully to her and was quite impossible. Of course, I will do exactly as you like. I have asked Sir Valence, Sir Sagramore, Sir Percevale, Sir Pelleas, and Sir Modred. I won't have Melissande, she is so peevish and complaining.

Then there is King Mark. Shall I ask him? Without Iseult, of course. He can't expect us to ask her after all that has happened. I hear the King of Orkney asked them both and that he now expects her to be asked, but nothing shall induce me to receive her. If you think it is impossible to ask him alone we had better leave it, and ask neither of them.

Oh! I quite forgot. There's Lancelot. Shall we ask him to stay? He's been so often, so if you would rather not have him we can quite well leave him out this time. I don't want him to think he's indispensable to you.

The weather has been fine and the hedges are a mass of primroses. Vivi the cat (I christened her after dear Vivien) caught a mouse yesterday. Do come back quickly.

Your loving

GUINEVERE.

King Arthur to Guinevere

CARLEON, *March* 20.

My dearest Guinevere,

I was delighted to hear from you. I am glad you are recovering, but I must beg you to take care of yourself. These east winds are very trying and the March sun most treacherous. We shall arrive two or three days before Whitsuntide. I will let you know the exact day. We have had a most successful and satisfactory time in every way. We rescued six damsels and captured two wizards and one heathen King. The knights behaved admirably.

With regard to the Jousts I do not wish to seem inhospitable, but are you sure there is room for every one you mention? Merlin must, of course, be asked. He would be very much hurt if we left him out.

As to King Mark, we must ask him also with the Queen. They are now completely and officially reconciled, and Tristram is engaged to be married to a Princess in Brittany. Therefore, since King Mark has magnanimously forgiven and forgotten, it would not be seemly for us to cast any

insidious slight upon them. To ask neither of them would be a slight, but to ask the King without the Queen would be a deliberate outrage. Besides, apart from our private feelings, the public good must be considered. We cannot afford to risk a war with Tintagel at this moment. I shall, of course, ask Lancelot. He is with me now. I cannot see any possible objection to his coming, and I have the greatest regard for him.

Please wrap up well when you go out. I am, with much love,

Your devoted husband,

ARTHUR.

Sir Lancelot to Guinevere

March 21.

The King has asked me to stay for the Jousts. From what he said about your health I gather you do not want me to come, so I said my old wound would not allow me to take part in the Jousts. Perhaps it is better that I should stay away. People are beginning to talk. Burn.

L.

Guinevere to King Arthur

CAMELOT, *Friday.*

Dearest Arthur,

Of course you know best. I entirely give in about Merlin and Lancelot, although I do think Merlin is trying, and that it makes the others jealous to ask him so often. But it is rather hard on me to be obliged to receive Iseult.

Of course with your noble nature you only see the good side of everything and everybody, but in Iseult's case the scandal was so public and the things they did so extraordinary that it is difficult to behave to her just as if it had never happened.

I like Iseult personally. I always liked her, but I do think it is trying that she should put on airs of virtue and insist on being respected. However, I have asked her *and* Mark. If they have any sense of decency they will refuse. I am quite well now. Merlin really did me good. We are having delicious weather, and I miss you all very much. Sir Galahad stopped here on his way West yesterday, but never said a word. I have ordered a new gown for the Jousts, but it is not finished yet. The weavers are too tiresome. The lists are getting

on. If possible, bring me back six-and-a-half yards of the best green Samite, double width, from Carleon. The same shade as I had before. They can't match the shade here. I am so glad everything went off well. It seem centuries to Whitsuntide.

Your loving
GUINEVERE.

Guinevere to Lancelot

CAMELOT.

I am sending this by P——, who is entirely to be trusted. You were wrong. It is most necessary that you should come to the Jousts. Your absence would be far more noticed than your presence. It is a pity you told that foolish lie. It is a great mistake ever to tell unnecessary lies. However, now it's done, the best thing you can do is to come disguised as an unknown knight. Then when you reveal yourself at the end—for I suppose there is no chance of your not winning?—you can say you thought your name gave you an unfair advantage, and that you wished to meet the knights on equal terms. The King will be pleased at this. It is an idea after his own heart.

Iseult is coming with King Mark. At first I thought this dangerous, but there was nothing to be done, and she will be quite safe as her one idea now is to be thought respectable, only we must be most careful. Iseult is a cat.

I dare not write more.

G.

Guinevere to Iseult

CAMELOT, *April* 21.

Darling Iseult,

I am overjoyed that you can both come. It will be too delightful to see you again. It is ages since we have met, isn't it? I do hope that the King is quite well and that his lumbago is not troubling him. Merlin will be here, and he will be sure to do him good. He might also do something for his deafness.

Arthur will be delighted to hear you are coming. He is devoted to the King. It will be a tiny party, of course—only Merlin, Yniol, Orkneys, Astolats, and a few of the knights. We will try to make you comfortable; but Camelot isn't Tintagel, and we have nothing to compare with your wonderful woods.

Good-bye, darling, give my best regards to the King.

Your loving
GUINEVERE.

P.S.—Sir Kay Hedius has just come back from Brittany. He was at our old friend Sir Tristram's wedding. He said it was glorious, and that she—Iseult the Lily-handed—was a dream of beauty. Tristram was looking very well and in tearing spirits. He 's grown quite fat. Isn't it funny?

Iseult to Guinevere

TINTAGEL.

Darling Guinevere,

Thank you so much for your most kind letter. I am afraid that after all I shall not be able to come to the Jousts. It is too tiresome. But I have not been at all well lately and the physicians say I must have change of air. I am ordered to the French coast and the King has got some cousins who live in a charming little house on the coast of Normandy. I am starting to-morrow, and I shall probably stay there during the whole month of May. It is too tiresome to miss the Jousts, and

you cannot imagine how disappointed I am. The King will, of course, come without me.

I hear that Sir Lancelot of the Lake is not going to compete this year for the Diamond on account of his health. I am so sorry. The people here say he is afraid of being beaten, and that there is a wonderful new knight called Lamorack who is better than everybody. Isn't it absurd? People are so spiteful. How you must miss the dear King, and you must be so lonely at Camelot without any of the knights.

By the way, is it true that Sir Lancelot is engaged to Elaine, the daughter of the Lord of Astolat? She is quite lovely, but I never thought that Lancelot cared for young girls. I think she is only sixteen.

Your loving

ISEULT OF CORNWALL.

Guinevere to Lancelot

Whit-Sunday.

The King has just told me whose sleeve it was you wore to-day. I now understand everything, and I must say I did not suspect you of playing this kind of double game. I do hate lies and liars, and,

above all, stupid liars. It is, of course, very humiliating to make such a mistake about a man. But I hope you will be happy with Elaine, and I pray Heaven she may never find you out.

GUINEVERE.

KING LEAR'S DAUGHTER

Letter from Goneril, Daughter of King Lear, to her sister Regan

I have writ my sister.
King Lear, Act I, Scene iv.

THE PALACE, *November*.

Dearest Regan,

I am sending you this letter by Oswald. We have been having the most trying time lately with Papa, and it ended to-day in one of those scenes which are so painful to people like you and me, who *hate* scenes. I am writing now to tell you all about it, so that you may be prepared. This is what has happened.

When Papa came here he brought a hundred knights with him, which is a great deal more than we could put up, and some of them had to live in the village. The first thing that happened was that they quarrelled with our people and refused to take orders from them, and whenever one told any one to do anything it was either—if it was one of Papa's

men—"not his place to do it"; or if it was one of our men, they said that Papa's people made work impossible. For instance, only the day before yesterday I found that blue vase which you brought back from Dover for me on my last birthday broken to bits. Of course I made a fuss, and Oswald declared that one of Papa's knights had knocked it over in a drunken brawl. I complained to Papa, who flew into a passion and said that his knights, and in fact all his retainers, were the most peaceful and courteous people in the world, and that it was my fault, as I was not treating him or them with the respect which they deserved. He even said that I was lacking in filial duty. I was determined to keep my temper, so I said nothing.

The day after this the chief steward and the housekeeper and both my maids came to me and said that they wished to give notice. I asked them why. They said they couldn't possibly live in a house where there were such "goings-on." I asked them what they meant. They refused to say, but they hinted that Papa's men were behaving not only in an insolent but in a positively outrageous manner to them. The steward said that Papa's knights were never sober, that they had entirely demoralized the household, and that life was simply not worth

living in the house; it was *impossible* to get anything done, and they couldn't sleep at night for the noise.

I went to Papa and talked to him about it quite quietly, but no sooner had I mentioned the subject than he lost all self-control, and began to abuse me. I kept my temper as long as I could, but of course one is only human, and after I had borne his revilings for some time, which were monstrously unfair and untrue, I at last turned and said something about people of his age being trying. Upon which he said that I was throwing up his old age at him, that I was a monster of ingratitude—and he began to cry. I cannot tell you how painful all this was to me. I did everything I could to soothe him and quiet him, but the truth is, ever since Papa has been here he has lost control of his wits. He suffers from the oddest kind of delusions. He thinks that for some reason he is being treated like a beggar; and although he has a hundred knights—a hundred, mind you! (a great deal more than we have)—in the house, who do nothing but eat and drink all day long, he says he is not being treated like a King! I do hate unfairness.

When he gave up the crown he said he was tired of affairs, and meant to have a long rest; but from

the very moment that he handed over the management of affairs to us he never stopped interfering, and was cross if he was not consulted about everything, and if his advice was not taken.

And what is still worse is this: ever since his last illness he has lost not only his memory but his control over language, so that often when he wants to say one thing he says just the opposite, and sometimes when he wishes to say some quite simple thing he uses *bad* language quite unconsciously. Of course we are used to this, and *we* don't mind, but I must say it is very awkward when strangers are here. For instance, the other day before quite a lot of people, quite unconsciously, he called me a dreadful name. Everybody was uncomfortable and tried not to laugh, but some people could not contain themselves. This sort of thing is constantly happening. So you will understand that Papa needs perpetual looking after and management. At the same time, the moment one suggests the slightest thing to him he boils over with rage.

But perhaps the most annoying thing which happened lately, or, at least, the thing which happens to annoy me most, is Papa's Fool. You know, darling, that I have always hated that kind of humour. He comes in just as one is sitting down

to dinner, and beats one on the head with a hard, empty bladder, and sings utterly idiotic songs, which make me feel inclined to cry. The other day, when we had a lot of people here, just as we were sitting down in the banqueting-hall, Papa's Fool pulled my chair from behind me so that I fell sharply down on the floor. Papa shook with laughter, and said: "Well done, little Fool," and all the courtiers who were there, out of pure snobbishness, of course, laughed too. I call this not only very humiliating for me, but undignified in an old man and a king; of course Albany refused to interfere. Like all men and all husbands, he is an arrant coward.

However, the crisis came yesterday. I had got a bad headache, and was lying down in my room, when Papa came in from the hunt and sent Oswald to me, saying that he wished to speak to me. I said that I wasn't well, and that I was lying down —which was perfectly true—but that I would be down to dinner. When Oswald went to give my message Papa beat him, and one of his men threw him about the room and really hurt him, so that he has now got a large bruise on his forehead and a sprained ankle.

This was the climax. All our knights came to

Albany and myself, and said that they would not stay with us a moment longer unless Papa exercised some sort of control over his men. I did not know what to do, but I knew the situation would have to be cleared up sooner or later. So I went to Papa and told him frankly that the situation was intolerable; that he must send away some of his people, and choose for the remainder men fitting to his age. The words were scarcely out of my mouth than he called me the most terrible names, ordered his horses to be saddled, and said that he would shake the dust from his feet and not stay a moment longer in this house. Albany tried to calm him, and begged him to stay, but he would not listen to a word, and said he would go and live with you.

So I am sending this by Oswald, that you may get it before Papa arrives and know how the matter stands. All I did was to suggest he should send away fifty of his men. Even fifty is a great deal, and puts us to any amount of inconvenience, and is a source of waste and extravagance—two things which I cannot bear. I am perfectly certain you will not be able to put up with his hundred knights any more than I was. And I beg you, my dearest Regan, to do your best to make Papa listen

to sense. No one is fonder of him than I am. I think it would have been difficult to find a more dutiful daughter than I have always been. But there is a limit to all things, and one cannot have one's whole household turned into a pandemonium, and one's whole life into a series of wrangles, complaints, and brawls, simply because Papa in his old age is losing the control of his faculties. At the same time, I own that although I kept my temper for a long time, when it finally gave way I was perhaps a little sharp. I am not a saint, nor an angel, nor a lamb, but I do hate unfairness and injustice. It makes my blood boil. But I hope that you, with your angelic nature and your tact and your gentleness, will put everything right and make poor Papa listen to reason.

Let me hear at once what happens.

Your loving

GONERIL.

P.S.—Another thing Papa does which is most exasperating is to throw up Cordelia at one every moment. He keeps on saying: "If only Cordelia were here," or "How unlike Cordelia!" And you will remember, darling, that when Cordelia was here Papa could not endure the sight of her. Her

irritating trick of mumbling and never speaking up used to get terribly on his nerves. Of course, I thought he was even rather unfair on her, trying as she is. We had a letter from the French Court yesterday, saying that she is driving the poor King of France almost mad.

P.P.S.—It is wretched weather. The poor little ponies on the heath will have to be brought in.

LADY MACBETH'S TROUBLE

Letter from Lady Macbeth to Lady Macduff

Most Private.

THE PALACE, FORRES,
October 10.

My dearest Flora,

I am sending this letter by Ross, who is starting for Fife to-morrow morning. I wonder if you could possibly come here for a few days. You would bring Jeamie of course. Macbeth is devoted to children. I think we could make you quite comfortable, although of course palaces are never very comfortable, and it 's all so different from dear Inverness. And there is the tiresome Court etiquette and the people, especially the Heads of the Clans, who are so touchy, and insist on one's observing every tradition. For instance, the bagpipes begin in the early morning; the pipers walk round the castle a little after sunrise, and this I find very trying, as you know what a bad sleeper I am. Only two nights

ago I nearly fell out of the window walking in my sleep. The doctor, who I must say is a charming man (he was the late King's doctor and King Duncan always used to say he was the only man who really understood his constitution), is giving me mandragora mixed with poppy and syrup; but so far it has not done me any good; but then I always was a wretched sleeper and now I am worse, because—well, I am coming at last to what I really want to say.

I am in very great trouble and I beg you to come here if you can, because you would be the greatest help. You shall have a bedroom facing south, and Jeamie shall be next to you, and my maid can look after you both, and as Macduff is going to England I think it would really be wiser and *safer* for you to come here than to stay all alone in that lonely castle of yours in these troublesome times, when there are so many robbers about and one never knows what may not happen.

I confess I have been very much put about lately. (You quite understand if you come we shall have plenty of opportunities of seeing each other alone in spite of all the tiresome etiquette and ceremonies, and of course you must treat me just the same as before; only in *public* you must just throw in a

"Majesty" now and then and curtchey and call me "Ma'am" so as not to shock the people.) I am sorry to say Macbeth is not at all in good case. He is really not at all well, and the fact is he has never got over the terrible tragedy that happened at Inverness. At first I thought it was quite natural he should be upset. Of course very few people know how fond he was of his cousin. King Duncan was his favourite cousin. They had travelled together in England, and they were much more like brothers than cousins, although the King was so much older than he is. I shall never forget the evening when the King arrived after the battle against those horrid Norwegians. I was very nervous as it was, after having gone through all the anxiety of knowing that Macbeth was in danger. Then on the top of that, just after I heard that he was alive and well, the messenger arrived telling me that the King was on his way to Inverness. Of course I had got nothing ready, and Elspeth our housekeeper put on a face as much as to say that we could not possibly manage in the time. However, I said she *must* manage. I knew our cousin wouldn't expect too much, and I spent the whole day making those flat scones he used to be so fond of.

I was already worried then because Macbeth, who is superstitious, said he had met three witches on the way (he said something about it in his letter) and they had apparently been uncivil to him. I thought they were gipsies and that he had not crossed their palm with silver, but when he arrived he was still brooding over this, and was quite *odd* in his way of speaking about it. I didn't think much of this at the time, as I put it down to the strain of what he had gone through, and the reaction which must always be great after such a time; but now it all comes back to me, and now that I think over it in view of what has happened since, I cannot help owning to myself that he was not himself, and if I had not known what a sober man he was, I should almost have thought the 1030 (Hildebrand) whisky had gone to his head—because when he talked of the old women he was quite incoherent: just like a man who has had an hallucination. But I did not think of all this till afterwards, as I put it down to the strain, as I have just told you.

But now! Well, I must go back a little way so as to make everything clear to you. Duncan arrived, and nothing could be more civil than he was. He went out of his way to be nice to everybody and praised the castle, the situation, the view, and even

the birds' nests on the walls! (All this, of course, went straight to my heart.) Donalbain and Malcolm were with him. They, I thought at the time, were not at all well brought up. They had not got their father's manners, and they talked in a loud voice and gave themselves airs.

Duncan had supper by himself, and before he went to bed he sent me a most beautiful diamond ring, which I shall always wear. Then we all went to bed. Macbeth was not himself that evening, and he frightened me out of my wits by talking of ghosts and witches and daggers. I did not, however, think anything serious was the matter and I still put it down to the strain and the excitement. However, I took the precaution of pouring a drop or two of my sleeping draught into the glass of water which he always drinks before going to bed, so that at least he might have a good night's rest. I suppose I did not give him a strong enough dose. (But one cannot be too careful with drugs, especially mandragora, which is bad for the heart.) At any rate, whether it was that or the awful weather we had that night (nearly all the trees in the park were blown down, and it will never be quite the same again) or whether it was that the hall porter got tipsy (why they choose the one day in the

year to drink when one has guests, and it really matters, I never could understand!) and made the most dreadful noise and used really disgraceful language at the front door about five o'clock in the morning, I don't know. At any rate, we were all disturbed long before I had meant that we should be called (breakfast wasn't nearly ready and Elspeth was only just raking out the fires). But, as I say, we were all woken up, and Macduff went to call the King, and came back with the terrible news.

Macbeth turned quite white, and at first my only thought was for him. I thought he was going to have a stroke or a fit. You know he has a very nervous, high-strung constitution, and nothing could be worse for him than a shock like this. I confess that I myself felt as though I wished the earth would open and swallow me up. To think of such a thing happening in our house!

Banquo, too, was as white as a sheet; but the only people who behaved badly (of course this is strictly between ourselves, and I do implore you not to repeat it, as it would really do harm if it got about that I had said this, but you are safe, aren't you, Flora?) were Donalbain and Malcolm. Donalbain said nothing at all, and all Malcolm said when

he was told that his father had been murdered was: "Oh! by whom?" I could not understand how he could behave in such a heartless way before so many people; but I must say in fairness that all the Duncans have a very odd way of showing grief.

Of course the first thing I thought was "Who can have done it?" and I suppose in a way it will always remain a mystery. There is no doubt that the chamber grooms actually did the deed; but whether they had any accomplices, whether it was just the act of drunkards (it turned out that the whole household had been drinking that night and not only the hall porter) or whether they were *instigated* by any one else (of course don't quote me as having suggested such a thing) we shall never know. Much as I dislike Malcolm and Donalbain, and shocking as I think their behaviour has been, and not only shocking but *suspicious*, I should not like any one to think that I suspected them of so awful a crime. It is one thing to be bad-mannered, it is another to be a parricide. However, there is no getting over the fact that by their conduct, by their extraordinary behaviour and flight to England, they made people suspect them.

I have only just now come to the real subject of my letter. At first Macbeth bore up pretty

well in spite of the blow, the shock, and the extra worry of the coronation following immediately on all this; but no sooner had we settled down at Forres than I soon saw he was far from being himself.

His appetite was bad; he slept badly, and was cross to the servants, making scenes about nothing. When I tried to ask him about his health he lost his temper. At last one day it all came out and I realized that another tragedy was in store for us. Macbeth is suffering from hallucinations; this whole terrible business has unhinged his mind. The doctor always said he was highly strung, and the fact is he has had another attack, or whatever it is, the same as he had after the battle, when he thought he had seen three witches. (I afterwards found out from Banquo, who was with him at the time, that the matter was even worse than I suspected.) He is suffering from a terrible delusion. He thinks (of course you will never breathe this to a soul) that he killed Duncan! You can imagine what I am going through. Fortunately, nobody has noticed it.

Only last night another calamity happened. Banquo had a fall out riding and was killed. That night we had a banquet we could not possibly put

off. On purpose I gave strict orders that Macbeth was not to be told of the accident until the banquet was over, but Lennox (who has no more discretion than a parrot) told him, and in the middle of dinner he had another attack, and I had only just time to get every one to go away before he began to rave. As it was, it must have been noticed that he wasn't himself.

I am in a terrible position. I never know when these fits are coming on, and I am afraid of people talking, because if it once gets about, people are so spiteful that somebody is sure to start the rumour that it 's true. Imagine our position, then! So I beg you, dear Flora, to keep all this to yourself, and if possible to come here as soon as possible.

I am, your affectionate,

HARRIET R.

P.S.—Don't forget to bring Jeamie. It will do Macbeth good to see a child in the house.

AT THE COURT OF KING CLAUDIUS

From a Player's Letter

We arrived at Elsinore in the morning. We were at once let into the presence of the Prince. He received us with the courtesy and kindliness which were native to him, and he seemed but little changed since his student days when he was as much our companion as our patron. It is true that his face and his expression have grown older and more serious, just as his body has grown more portly, but in so far as his conduct and demeanour are concerned he is the same. No words can picture the dreariness and monotony of the life which he leads here in the Court. He is virtually a prisoner, for should he in any way transgress the fixed limits of the tradition and etiquette which govern this place, the courtiers and the officials of the Court do not hesitate to say that he is deranged in his mind. As soon as he greeted

us he recalled a thousand memories of those freer and happier days, and he seemed to take as great a delight in our art and our trade as in days gone by. His love for the stage, for well turned verse, and the nice declamation of noble lines is as ardent as ever, and he bade me recall to him a speech from a tragedy on which his sure taste had alighted, although it escaped the notice and the applause of the populace.

It was arranged that on the night following the morning of our arrival we should play before the King and the Court. The piece chosen by the Prince was entitled "The Murder of Gonzago," a somewhat old-fashioned bit of fustian, chosen no doubt to suit the taste of the King and his courtiers. The Prince himself wrote a speech of some sixteen lines which he bade me insert in my part. We spent the day in study and rehearsal, which were sorely needed, since we had not played the piece for many years. In the evening a banquet was held in the castle. The King and Queen, the Chamberlain and all the Court dignitaries were present, and the Prince, although he did not grace the feast with his presence, insisted that we, the players, should take part in it. The Court dignitaries were averse to this, but the Prince overruled their objections

by saying that unless we took part in the banquet he would not be present at the performance.

The feast was in the banqueting-hall; the King and the Queen together with all the Court took their places before a high, raised table at the end of the banqueting-hall. We players sat at a separate table at the further end of the hall. The feast began long before sunset and lasted far into the night. There was much deep drinking, but an atmosphere of ceremony and gloom hung over the festivity; the mirth rang hollow and the hilarity was false and strained.

Towards the end of the banquet the King rose to his feet and in pompous phrase spoke of the pleasure that he felt in seeing so many loyal friends gathered about him and that he looked forward to the day when the Prince, his nephew, would once more join heart and soul in the festivities of the Court, and then looking towards us he was pleased to say that he trusted to the skill, the well-known skill, and the widely-famed art of the players who were now visiting his capital to have a salutary influence and to be successful in distracting the mind and in raising the spirits of the Prince, which had been so sadly affected ever since the demise of his much-to-be regretted brother. These words elicited loud cheers

from the assembly and it was pointed out to us by the Chamberlain that the speech of the King was a further sign of his Majesty's unerring tact and never-failing condescension.

As we left the banqueting-hall, after the King and Queen had retired, I noticed that the Prince was pacing up and down the terrace of the castle, lost as it were in abstraction. During the whole of the next day we were busy in study and rehearsal. The Lord Chamberlain was somewhat concerned as to the nature of the performance we were to give. He desired to be present at a rehearsal, but here again the Prince intervened with impetuous authority. The Lord Chamberlain then sought me out in person and said that he earnestly trusted there would be nothing either in the words of the play or in the manner in which it should be played that would give offence to the illustrious audience. I replied that the play had been chosen by the Prince and that it would be well if he would address any suggestions he had to make directly to His Royal Highness. The Lord Chamberlain said that the Prince was in so irritable a frame of mind that he could ill brook any interference, but that he relied on our good sense and inherent tact to omit any word or phrase which, in the present circum-

stances (for he pointed out that the Court was in half-mourning) might be likely to give offence. He said that for instance any too exuberant display of buffoonery, any too great an insistence on broad jokes would be out of place at the present time. I assured him that so far from the Prince having instigated us towards clowning he had begged us to suppress all buffoonery of any kind, which had ever been distasteful to him, and this none knew so well as I.

Elsinore, like all courts, was rife with gossip, the common talk being that the Prince was courting the daughter of the Chamberlain, who, owing to the position she occupied, they professed to find beautiful, and who in reality is but an insipid minx and likely to develop on the lines of her doddering old father, while they say that she will not hear of his suit, being secretly but passionately enamoured of one of the minor courtiers, by name Osric.

Others say that the Prince's passion for the Chamberlain's daughter is a mere pretence and that it is his friend Horatio who is in reality plighted to her. But we, who know the Prince well, know that he has no thought of such things. He is an artist, and had he not had the misfortune to be born a Prince he would have been a player of first-

rate excellence. Being gifted with the artistic temperament and the histrionic nature, the mode of existence which he is forced to lead amidst the conventions, the formalities, the rules, and the unvarying tediousness of stiff and stately Court decorum, is to him intolerable. He is thinking the whole time of modes of expression, pictures, phrases, situations, conceits, and his mind lives in the world of dream and holds office at the court of Art. That is why, in this nest of officials, he is like a cuckoo among a brood of respectable blackbirds.

The performance took place after the banquet on the second evening of our stay. The stage was appointed in a long, low room adjoining the banqueting-hall. Slightly raised seats for the King and the Queen were erected in the centre of the room in front of the stage, and the Court were assembled in line with them and behind them. The Chamberlain and his daughter sat in the front row, and the gossip of the place seemed to be in some way substantiated by the fact that she never took her eyes off Osric the courtier (a handsome lad) during the whole of the performance. He was standing next to the Queen's throne.

The Prince, before the trumpets sounded for the performance to begin, came to us and gave us

his final instructions which bore, as ever, the stamp of his fine taste and nice discrimination, and which proved to us once more that he was by nature a professional player. When the performance began he strolled into the hall and reclined on the floor at the feet of the Chamberlain's daughter. We played as well as might be expected considering the chilling effect which cannot fail to be produced by the presence of exalted personages, for the Court had their eyes fixed on the throne and only dared to murmur approval when approval had already been expressed from that quarter. During all the first part of the play such moments were rare and indeed the audience seemed to have some difficulty in comprehending the words and the still plainer action which we suited to the words. But the Prince came to our aid, whispering audibly to his uncle and his mother and elucidating for them the passages which proved perplexing. He also made various comments to the Chamberlain's daughter, and was quick to apprehend the slightest play of feature, gesture, or intonation which struck him as being successful and true.

The Chamberlain's daughter was listless throughout and seemed to take no interest in the play, and her father was too enfeebled in mind to catch the

drift of it at all, but the manifest interest which the Prince took in it seemed, nevertheless, to cause him uneasiness, and he never ceased furtively to glance at the King and the Queen. The Queen, on the other hand, seemed much pleased, and indeed they say that she has ever been fond of spectacles and stage-playing. By the time the play had reached its climax, with the entry of Lucianus who spoke the lines which had been inserted by the Prince, the King, who had been growing more and more fretful (for he has no taste for letters) rose from his seat and gave the signal for departure, and the Chamberlain immediately gave orders that the play should cease. The King remarked that the heat in the hall was oppressive and he withdrew, followed by the Court, and the Prince, who was in an ecstasy of joy at the beautiful performance, clapped his hands loudly and congratulated us warmly, saying that he had seldom enjoyed a play so much.

So tedious is the routine at these courts that this little incident was much discussed and debated, and the Prince's conduct in so loudly applauding a play after His Majesty had signified that the performance was tedious has been severely commented on. To-morrow we sail for Hamburg.

ROMEO AND ROSALINE

One fairer than my love! the all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match since first the world begun.

ROMEO ON ROSALINE.
Romeo and Juliet, Act I, Scene ii.

Is Rosaline, whom thou didst love so dear,
So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies
Not truly in their hearts but in their eyes.
Jesu Maria! what a deal of brine
Hath wash'd thy sallow cheeks for Rosaline!

Romeo and Juliet, Act II, Scene ii.

Letter from Rosaline to her friend Olivia

VERONA.

My dear Olivia,

Thank you very much for your kind letter. I am only just beginning to be able to write letters,

as you may well imagine after all that we have gone through, and I am still in half-mourning, although *they* say this is ridiculous. As a matter of fact, nobody has a better right to be in mourning for Romeo than I, considering that he would certainly have married me had it not been for a series of quite extraordinary accidents. Mamma says that I was to blame, but I will tell you exactly what happened, and you can judge for yourself.

I made Romeo's acquaintance two years ago. We at once got on well together, and I never minded his childishness, which used to get on some people's nerves. He was the kind of person whom it was really impossible to dislike, because he was so impetuous, so full of high spirits and good humour. Some people thought he was good looking; I never did. It was never his looks that attracted me, but I liked him for *himself*. Wherever I went he used to be there, and whenever we met he always talked to me the whole time and never looked at any one else, so that we were *practically* engaged although nothing was announced.

After this had gone on for some time Mamma became annoyed; she said we must do one thing or the other; we must either be engaged and announce our engagement or else that I must give up

seeing Romeo altogether. This of course I refused to do. At last we made a compromise: in our own house I was allowed to see Romeo as much as I liked, but if I went out to banquets or masques I was to talk to other people and not to Romeo. Papa and Mamma had nothing against my marrying Romeo, because Mamma never liked the Capulets, although they are Papa's relations. The result of this compromise, which was only arranged quite lately, was quite disastrous. Romeo could not understand it at all. He thought it was my fault, and that I was growing tired of him. It was then that he begged me to let our engagement be publicly announced. I did not want the announcement to be made public until the winter, because one never really has such fun once an engagement is known. However, I would no doubt have given in in the end. As it was, Romeo was annoyed, and just before the Capulets' banquet we had a scene. I told him quite plainly that he had no business to treat me as if I belonged to him. I had given him to understand, however, that I should be at the Capulets' banquet, and I fully expected him to come and to beg for a reconciliation.

He came to the banquet, and it so happened that Lady Capulet's daughter, who was far too young

for that kind of thing, was allowed to come down that night. A child of that age is of course allowed to do anything, as it is supposed not to matter what they do. And as she had been told that the one thing she was not to do was to speak to a Montague, out of sheer naughtiness and perverseness she went to Romeo and made the most outrageous advances to him. Romeo, out of *pique* and simply to annoy me, kept up the farce, and they say that he even climbed over a wall that night, right into the house of the Capulets, and spoke to Juliet! All this time Juliet was betrothed to her cousin, the County Paris, and it was arranged that their marriage was to take place shortly.

What exactly happened we none of us know, but it is quite certain that Lady Capulet had found out what was going on, and having heard that Romeo had been climbing her garden wall and serenading Juliet under her very nose, she thought it would be an excellent opportunity to settle the old family quarrel and reconcile the two families by an alliance. So she forced Romeo to *promise* her he would marry Juliet, and some people say that the marriage ceremony was actually performed in secret, but this is *not true*, as I will tell you later. Of course, Lady Capulet did not dare tell her husband;

on the contrary, every arrangement was made for Juliet's marriage with Paris; but the day before it was to come off a put-up quarrel was brought about between Romeo and one of the Capulets, which ended in Romeo's being banished to Mantua. He wrote to me every day, saying how miserable he was that all this tiresome business had happened, and how he was longing to see me again, and how it was not his fault.

Lady Capulet then gave Juliet a strong sleeping draught, which was to have the effect of making her like a corpse for forty-two hours. Every one was to think she was dead. She was to be taken to the vault of the Capulets and Romeo was to fetch her after the forty-two hours were over, when she should come to from her sleep. This was Lady Capulet's plan, and Romeo of course could do nothing but accept it, much as he must have hated this kind of thing. Romeo had many faults, but I must say he was never deceitful. I did not know anything about it at the time. All we knew was that, owing to a street brawl which had ended unfortunately, Romeo had been banished to Mantua. He wrote from there every day. He said over and over again in his letters that he was in great difficulties, but that he hoped to be back soon and see

me again. I did not answer his letters because I was annoyed by the way in which he had spoken to Juliet at the ball. I had not then heard about the incident of the orchard, otherwise I should have been angrier still.

While things were in this state the whole matter took a tragic turn by the stupidity of Lady Capulet's nurse, who gave Juliet the wrong sleeping draught. Instead of giving her a potion which made her sleep for forty-two hours, they gave her some very strong rat poison which happened to be lying about. She drank it, poor thing, and never woke again.

Romeo came back from Mantua to meet Juliet at the vault, where he no doubt intended to have a final explanation with her and her family, to explain the whole thing: his engagement to me, and the impossibility of his contracting any alliance with the Capulet family, especially as he had very strong principles on this point. But when he got to the tomb he found the County Paris, who was nominally engaged to Juliet, and of course extremely angry to find a Montague in such a place. They fought, and Paris killed Romeo, thus putting an end to all Lady Capulet's intrigues. But she was not to be defeated thus. She had already bribed an old

Franciscan monk, called Friar Laurence, to say that he had secretly *married* Juliet and Romeo, and her nurse (a horrible old woman) corroborated the friar's evidence. And so, with very much solemnity and fuss, a reconciliation was brought about between the two families, and they say that Benvolio, Montague's nephew, is to marry Katherine, Lady Capulet's niece by marriage, and thus the quarrel between the families has finally been settled and Lady Capulet has got her way.

I don't mind the two families being reconciled in the least; in fact we are all very glad of it, as life in Verona was made quite intolerable by their constant brawling and quarrelling. But what I do think is unfair, and what is particularly irritating to *me*, is that everybody, even Papa and Mamma, take it for granted that Romeo was really in love with Juliet, and had given up all thoughts of me. Nobody knows the truth except me, and I cannot tell it without making myself appear conceited and ridiculous. You can imagine how irritating this is. Of course, when all this happened I was so overcome by the shock that I was very ill and did not care what was said, one way or the other. Papa and Mamma had to take me to Venice for a few

days, as I was in such a state of nerves. Now, the change of air has done me good, and I am slowly getting better again. I am told that everybody believes that Romeo and Juliet were married by Friar Laurence. Of course, once such a legend gets about nothing will ever make people think the contrary. But even if they *were* married it would not really affect me, for it was a sheer case of coercion. If Romeo did marry Juliet he did it because he could not help himself, after having been discovered in her garden by that old cat Lady Capulet, who is a very, very wicked woman, and capable of anything. In fact I am not at all sure that she did not poison her daughter on purpose, and so bring about the reconciliation between the two families without having all the trouble of facing and defeating her husband's opposition to the match.

When you next come to see me I will show you Romeo's letters. Fortunately I have kept them all. They are very beautiful, and some of them are in rime; and you will see for yourself whether he loved me or not. I cannot read them without crying. You have no idea what lovely things he says in them. For instance, one day he sent me a pair

of silk gloves, and with them, written on a small scroll:

> Oh that I were a glove upon thy hand,
> That I might touch thy cheek.

His letters were full of lovely things like that, and I cannot think of them without crying.

Your loving

ROSALINE.

A FIRST NIGHT

Letter from Jean-Antoine de Binet to a Friend in Paris, July 20, 1602

Yesterday I went to the theatre to see a Tragedy played by the Lord Chamberlain, his servants, called "The Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." I was taken thither by Guasconi, who is attached to the Italian Ambassador, and who desired that I should not miss any of the curiosities of the city. The play was new, and the theatre was crowded with people, many of whom were of high rank, since noblemen in this country are fond of visiting the playhouse. They sit in places kept for them on the stage, and encourage the players by applause, and they express their approval and their blame.

The play is written partly in a kind of verse, which is pleasing to the ear and not without a certain happy fancy; but Guasconi told me that the English, who have learnt our science and make

sonnets and madrigals after the pattern of our masters, do not consider this kind of writing to be either poetry or literature; but these rough and unpolished rhythms are used to tickle the popular ear and to please the taste of the common people.

There were in the theatre many well-known faces. Sir Bacon was sitting in the front, but he went to sleep shortly after the beginning of the play, and slept right until the end, none daring to disturb him. At the end of the play his servants woke him up by shaking him. He is a busy man, and goes to the theatre for repose, liking well the music, the high screeching of the players, and the buzz of tongues, and finding them conducive to repose. In one of the boxes Guasconi pointed me out the beautiful Countess of Nottingham, whom, he said, the English consider to be one of their most beautiful countrywomen. She has the marks of race, and was richly and elegantly dressed in black and crimson colours. With her was a young nobleman whom I took to be her son, but Guasconi told me that this was not so. He was her second husband. One nobleman, the Earl of Essex, arrived in the middle of the performance, and talked loudly to his friends, paying but little attention to the players. Since his father was beheaded not long

ago it was considered a lapse in taste on his part to visit the theatre so soon. In the theatre were several well-known players from other theatres, who were much clapped by the populace when they entered. The crowd was good-humoured, and pleased with the show: but they made a great noise, eating oranges and nuts, and throwing shells and peel right and left. There were also in the audience some men of letters, scholars and noblemen, whose fame as writers of verse is the talk of the town. For instance, Lord Southampton, who has written over a hundred sonnets; Sir Iger and the Countess of Pembrock, the author of "The Fall of Troy," which those who know say is the finest epic which has been written since the death of Virgil. There were also many students, who were tempestuous and unruly in the expression of their enjoyment, and among these many vagabond writers and ballad-mongers.

The show was not displeasing, being full of much excellent clowning and fine dresses. It is a tale of murder and revenge such as have been brought into the fashion by the Italian story-tellers. It is brutal, and therefore suits the English taste, for Guasconi tells me the English will not go to the playhouse unless they can see tales of battle and

murder with plenty of fighting on the stage, mixed with grotesque episodes and rough horseplay. The players declaimed their words nicely, and the utterance of the verse, especially that which was spoken by the young boy who played the part of the mad heroine of the play, struck me as being not unmelodious poetry, but when I said this to the young literary noblemen with whom we supped after the performance, they split their sides with laughter, and said how impossible it was for a foreigner to judge the literature of a country which was not his own.

The author of the play, whose name I have forgotten, but which was something like John or James Shockper or Shicksperry, was himself, they told me, one of the players, which proved that he could neither be a man of education nor capable of writing his own tongue. In the play, they told me, he had played the part of the ghost. If this really be so, he cannot be a man of talent, for he spoke his lines so feebly and so haltingly that the vagabonds in the body of the theatre laughed and interrupted him several times, shouting such things as "Speak louder!" and "Go back to your grave." The stage plays are, I was told, almost always written by players, for they best know what

suits the popular taste, being of the populace and vagabonds themselves.

The scene which pleased the audience most was that of a fight in which the players fought bravely, more after the Italian style than the French, and the audience was greatly delighted by the close of the play, and laughed heartily when all the characters were killed and rolled about on the stage, the actor who played the King was especially popular; he had a jovial face, so that whenever he spoke, and sometimes even before he spoke, the audience laughed, heartily enjoying his comic talent.

There is no intelligible story in the play, nor is it possible to follow the sequence of events that happen on the stage; but it is rather the aim of the performance to present the public with a series of varied pictures, pleasant to the eye owing to the finery, the brave dresses, the glint of steel rapiers, the tinselled cloaks, and pleasing to the ear owing to the interludes of viol and hautboy playing.

At the end of the performance there was loud clapping, and the chief actor, who is famous in this country—so famous, indeed, that there is talk of emancipating him from his position as a vagabond and making him equal to a soldier of the Queen—was called on to the stage; nor would the public let

him depart until he had spoken to them, which he did. He thanked them for their warm welcome, and for expressing their pleasure at the performance of the fine play which John or James Shicksperry had written. He said he had felt sure that this play would not disappoint them, and he intended before long to give them another of the same kind, in which there would be still more murders, still more fighting, many more ghosts, and yet finer dresses. What the name of that play was, he said, was as yet a secret: who had written it was a secret. Here the audience shouted out: "We all know who has written it, it is old John or James." (Now I come to think of it, I remember his name was Bill or Billy or Ben.) Since they had guessed, he said, he would not conceal it any longer: it *was* Billy, and the play, which he knew they would enjoy, and in which there was plenty of clowning, was called "King Lear."

The audience was pleased at this, and cheered for several minutes. They shouted for the author, for old Ben, and went on shouting while people hurried backward and forward across the stage. The author did not come forward, and the shouting continued. At last the chief actor returned, and bowing to the audience, said that old Ben

was no longer in the house: he had gone to the tavern. After this there was more cheering, and the actor, kissing his hand to the audience, left the stage.

Guasconi took me to the Mermaid Tavern, a low place where the actors go after such performances, and where some of the nobles and the learned repair also, for the sake of change and to enjoy the spectacle. Here we were obliged to drink a great deal of a hot and nauseous mixture called sack, which is made of good wines spoilt by the admixture of much sugar and spice. I hate these English mixtures; their sweetmeats are made of sugared cake mixed with meat, and with their meat they eat sugared fruits. You can imagine how nauseous is this system, and indeed it reminds me of their plays. Their plays are like their plum puddings, full of great lumps of suet in which little sweet plums and currants are imbedded, but difficult to find. I said this to Guasconi, but he told me I must not judge of the English either by their food or their plays, but that if I wished to judge of their literature I should read the Sonnets of the Countess of Rutland, and he quoted one which begins:

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

Moreover, he said, the English were not a literary but a musical nation. Their music was unequalled in all Europe; it was the art (and the only art) in which they excelled; witness the divine melodies of Orlando Gibbons, Morley, and Dowland, which, indeed, I had heard performed at the Court, and had greatly enjoyed, for we have nothing like it in France.

The author of the play, Ben Shicksperry, arrived at the Mermaid late, and a learned man who was there, and whose name they told me was Will Johnson, condescended not only to speak but to drink with him. The players made a great noise, toasting each other, likewise the noblemen, who spent the time in violent disputes on the merits and demerits of this writer and that writer. After a time everybody began to talk of public affairs, of the policy of Spain, and of a party of English politicians whom they called pro-Spaniards: and they all agreed that these latter deserved to be immersed in a horse-trough, and so, late in the night, they set out to accomplish this unrefined joke. The English, in spite of their great culture, and their learning, their wonderful power of speaking foreign languages—for every one of the noblemen speaks perfectly not only Greek and Latin, but five

or six other languages, and is well versed in astrology, music, and chess-playing—the English, I repeat, in spite of all this, have something barbarous at heart, which is awakened after they have partaken much of that nauseous potion called sack.

THE POET, THE PLAYER, AND THE LITERARY AGENT

Letter from Mr. Nichols, Literary Agent, to Lord Bacon

My Lord,

I have now submitted the plays which your lordship forwarded to me to seven publishers: Messrs. Butter, Mr. Blount, Mr. Thorpe, Mr. Waterson, Mr. Andrew Wise, Mr. Steevens, and Mr. G. Eld; and I very much regret to inform your lordship that I have not been able to persuade any of these publishers to make an offer for the publication of any of the plays, although Mr. Thorpe would be willing to print them at your lordship's expense, provided that they appeared under your lordship's name. The cost, however, would be very great. No one of these publishers is willing to publish the plays anonymously, and they agree in saying that while the plays contain passages of

exceptional merit, there is, unfortunately, at the present moment no demand in the market for the literary play. This form of literature is in fact at present a drug on the market; and they suggest that your lordship, whose anonymity I have of course respected, should convert these plays into essays, epics, masques, or any other form which is at present popular with the reading public. There is certainly very little chance at present of my being able to find a publisher for work of this description. Therefore I await your lordship's instructions before sending them to any other publishers.

At the same time I would suggest, should your lordship not consider such a course to be derogatory, that I should submit the plays in question to one or two of the best known theatrical managers with a view to performance. I would of course keep the authorship of the plays a secret.

Awaiting your lordship's commands in this matter,

I am,

Your lordship's most humble and
obedient servant,
J. J. Nichols.

Letter from Mr. Nichols to Lord Bacon

My Lord,

I am in receipt of a communication from Mr. Fletcher, the chief of the Lord Chamberlain's servants, now playing at the Globe Theatre. Mr. Fletcher informs me that he has read the plays with considerable interest. He considers that they are not only promising but contain passages of positive merit.

Mr. Fletcher, however, adds that your lordship is no doubt fully aware that such plays are totally unsuited to the stage; indeed it would be impossible to produce them for many reasons. With regard to the first batch, namely, the Biblical series, the David and Saul trilogy, Joseph and Potiphar, and King Nebuchadnezzar, there could of course be no question of their production, however much they might be altered or adapted for the stage; for it would be impossible to obtain a licence, not only on account of the religious subject matter, which of necessity must prove shocking to the

greater part of the audience, but also owing to the boldness of the treatment. Mr. Fletcher begs me to tell your lordship that he is far from suggesting that your lordship has handled these solemn themes in any but the most reverent manner; but at the same time he is anxious to point out that the public, being but insufficiently educated, is likely to misunderstand your lordship's intentions, and to regard your lordship's imaginative realization of these sacred figures as sacrilegious.

With regard to the second series, the tragedies, Mr. Fletcher states that the play entitled "Hamlet" might, if about three-quarters of the whole play were omitted, be made fit for stage presentation, but even then the matter would be extremely hazardous. Even if enough of the play were left in order to render the story coherent, the performance would still last several hours and be likely to try the patience of any but a special audience. Such a play would doubtless appeal to a limited and cultivated public, but as your lordship is aware, the public which frequents the Globe Theatre is neither chosen nor cultivated, and it is doubtful whether a public of this kind would sit through a play many of the speeches in which are over a hundred lines long. Mr. Fletcher adds that a play of

this kind is far more suited for the closet than for the stage, and suggests that your lordship should publish it as a historical chronicle. With regard to these tragedies Mr. Fletcher further points out that there are already in existence several plays on the themes which your lordship has treated, which have not only been produced but enjoyed considerable success.

With regard to the third series, the comedies, Mr. Fletcher states that these plays, although not without considerable charm and while containing many passages of graceful and melodious writing, are far more in the nature of lyrical poems than of plays. Mr. Fletcher adds that if these were also considerably reduced in length and rendered even still more lyrical and accompanied by music, they might be performed as masques or else in dumb show.

Finally, Mr. Fletcher suggests, if the author of these plays is anxious that they should be performed, that your lordship should send the plays to an experienced actor who should alter and arrange them for stage presentation. Mr. Fletcher suggests that should your lordship see your way to agree to this, he has in his company a player named William Shakespeare who is admirably fitted for

the undertaking, and who has already had much experience in adapting and altering plays for the stage.

I am,
Your lordship's most obedient
and humble servant,
J. J. Nichols.

Letter from Mr. Nichols to Lord Bacon

My Lord,

In accordance with your lordship's instructions I submitted the plays to Mr. William Shakespeare. I am now in receipt of Mr. Shakespeare's full report on the plays.

Mr. Shakespeare confirms Mr. Fletcher's opinion that the plays in their present state are far too long for production. The religious series he does not discuss, as being by their nature precluded from performance. With regard to the historical tragedies, "Edward III," "Mary Tudor," "Lady Jane Grey," and "Katherine Parr" Mr. Shakespeare points out that none of these plays would be passed by the Censor because they contain many allusions which

would be considered to touch too nearly, and give possible offence to, certain exalted personages.

With regard to the tragedies, Mr. Shakespeare is quite willing to arrange "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" for the stage. More than half of the play will have to be omitted: the whole of the first act, dealing with Hamlet's student days at Wittenburg, Mr. Shakespeare considers to be totally irrelevant to the subsequent action of the play, although the long scene between the young prince and Dr. Faustus contains many passages which are not only poetical but dramatic. Mr. Shakespeare regrets to have to sacrifice these passages, but maintains that if this act be allowed to stand as it is at present, the play would be condemned to failure. Mr. Shakespeare is also anxious to cut out the whole of the penultimate act, which deals entirely with Ophelia's love affair with Horatio. This act, though containing much that is subtle and original, would be likely, Mr. Shakespeare says, to confuse, and possibly to shock, the audience. As to the soliloquies, Mr. Shakespeare says that it is impossible to get an audience at the present day to listen to a soliloquy of one hundred lines. Mr. Shakespeare suggests that if possible they should all be cut down to a quarter of their present length.

Out of the remaining plays, Mr. Shakespeare selects the following as being fit for the stage: "Macbeth," "Romeo and Juliet," "Mephistopheles," "Paris and Helen," "Alexander the Great," and "Titus Andronicus." Of all these Mr. Shakespeare says that by far the finest from a stage point of view is the last. It is true that the action of this play is at present a little slow and lacking in incident, but Mr. Shakespeare says that he sees a way, by a few trifling additions, of increasing its vitality; and he is certain that, should this play be well produced and competently played, it would prove successful. The tragedy of "Macbeth" might also be adapted to the popular taste, but here again Mr. Shakespeare says the play is at least four times too long.

I would be glad if your lordship would inform me what reply I am to make to Mr. Shakespeare.

I am,

Your lordship's obedient and humble servant,

J. J. Nichols.

Letter from Lord Bacon to Mr. Nichols

Sir,

I am quite willing that Mr. Shakespeare should try his hand on "Hamlet," "Macbeth," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Titus Andronicus," but I cannot consent to let him shorten my "Mephistopheles," my "Alexander the Great," or my "Paris and Helen." I should of course wish to see a printed copy of the play as arranged by Mr. Shakespeare before it is produced.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

BACON.

Letter from Lord Bacon to Mr. Nichols

Sir,

I received the printed copies of my four plays as arranged by Mr. Shakespeare. I would be much obliged if you would communicate to him the following instructions: (1) "Hamlet" may stand

as it is. The whole nature of the play is altered, and the chief character is at present quite unintelligible, but if Mr. Shakespeare thinks that in its present form it will please an audience, he is at liberty to produce it, as it is not a piece of work for which I have any special regard, and it was written more as an exercise than anything else. (2) I cannot allow "Romeo and Juliet" to appear with the changed ending made by Mr. Shakespeare. Mr. Shakespeare is perhaps right in thinking that his version of the play, ending as it does with the marriage of Juliet and Paris and the reconciliation of Romeo and Rosaline, is more subtle and true to life, but in this matter I regard my knowledge of the public as being more sound than that of Mr. Shakespeare. As a member of the public myself, I am convinced that the public is sentimental, and would be better pleased by the more tragic and romantic ending which I originally wrote. (3) With regard to Mr. Shakespeare's suggestion that in "Macbeth" the sleep-walking scene should fall to Macbeth, instead of to Lady Macbeth, I will not hear of any such change. (Confidential: The reason of my refusal is that this change seems to me merely dictated by the vanity of the actor, and his desire that the man's part may predominate over

the woman's.) (4) "Titus Andronicus." I have no objection to Mr. Shakespeare's alterations.

Your obedient servant,

BACON.

Letter from Lord Bacon to Mr. Nichols

Sir,

I was present last night at the Globe Theatre at the performance of my play "Macbeth," as produced by Mr. Shakespeare. I confess that I was much disgusted by the liberties which Mr. Shakespeare has taken with my work, which I am certain far exceed the changes and alterations which were originally presented to me, and which I myself revised and approved. For instance, Mr. Shakespeare has made a great many more omissions than he originally suggested. And at the end of many of the scenes he has introduced many totally unwarranted tags, such as, for instance:

I'll see it done.
What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.

And, worst of all:

> It is concluded:—Banquo, thy soul's flight,
> If it find Heaven, must find it out to-night.

The whole play is riddled with such additions, not to speak of several incidents of an altogether barbarous and outrageous character, and of certain other interpolations of coarse buffoonery, inserted in the most serious parts of the play to raise a laugh among the more ignorant portions of the rabble. Of course I cannot now withdraw them from the stage without risking the discovery of their authorship. Mr. Shakespeare is at liberty to produce and perform in any of the plays written by me which are now in his possession, provided that they appear under his name, and that the authorship is attributed to him.

Your obedient servant,

Bacon.

BATH, 1663

Letter from a Frenchman to a Friend in Paris

BATH, *August* 20, 1663.

We arrived here with the Court last week, the physician having decided that the hot waters of this far-off and desolate spot would prove more beneficial to the Queen's health than the cold waters of beautiful Tunbridge Wells. Bath has not the sunny elegance of the latter place, but the Court are doing their best to enliven this otherwise dreary spot. One of their chief occupations is to play at bowls, but you must not think that this game is confined, as in France, to artisans and lackeys. On the contrary, it is here a game of gentlefolk, and there is both skill in it and a certain art, and the places where these games are played are singularly charming and elegant. They are called "boulingrins." They consist of small meadows, of which the grass is as smooth as a

billiard table. As soon as the heat of the day is over everybody meets here, and many heavy wagers are made. I confess that I have lost considerable sums at this sport, but have been more successful at cock-fighting.

There is dancing every night at the King's. Often a comedy is played, which is followed by a supper. As for music, it never ceases. The English are above all things a musical nation; their skill both in the art of singing and dancing far excelling that of our courtiers. For instance, the Chevalier de Grammont, who is reckoned one of our most accomplished dancers, is not sufficiently skilful to take part in the Royal dance.

The fashionable instrument is now the guitar, which was introduced here by an Italian, whose compositions so pleased the King that everybody became mad about this instrument, so that you see no one at the Court who does not play the guitar, whether or no they possess a talent for so doing. Some, such as the Earl of Arran, play as well as the Italian himself. Others extract but futile discord from this difficult instrument. It is a curious thing that the English, who have obtained an unexampled liberty in political matters, show themselves curiously slavish and lacking in initiative

and independence in matters of thought, pleasure, and recreation. Their political liberty is extraordinary; for instance, in their Parliament the members are not only allowed to speak their minds freely, but also to do a number of astonishing things, such as call the most important members of the State to the Bar! The Earl of Bristol remained free in the town after he had accused the Lord Chancellor of high treason! And even the populace considers that it has the right to speak of public affairs.

Not long ago, at the Stock Exchange, I heard a political speech quoted on every side, and even the boatmen in the barges discuss matters of State with the noble Lords whom they convey to the Houses of Parliament. On the other hand, in matters of pleasure and pastime the English are slaves of convention; everybody wishes to do what every one else is doing. The matter of the guitar-playing is an instance of this. As soon as some high personage makes a sport, an occupation, or a manner of dress fashionable, the crowd follow in abject obedience and perfect uniformity like sheep.

Indeed, we not long ago had a narrow escape from having a peculiarly tedious occupation forced upon us: the Duke of York fell in love with a

Scotch game called *goff*, which is played, so they say, in the more sterile regions of the extreme north of Scotland, where the inhabitants still feed on oats and wear scarcely any clothes. This game consists in hitting a hard ball about the size of a turkey's egg into the dense heath with a kind of stick. Several hours are then spent in looking for the ball, and when, after much difficulty and discomfort, it has been found, the player immediately hits it as hard as he can into the distance and resumes the laborious search. This game would no doubt have become the fashion had not the King, who has a horror of introducing an element of seriousness into pastimes which are designed exclusively for recreation, remarked that such a game was fit only for very small children or for men who were so old that they had reached their second childhood. After that we heard no more of this intolerable sport.

Again, Prince Rupert, who is distinguished by his studious habits, his love of chemistry and mathematics and his awkward manners, attempted to introduce a game of cards called "Trump" or "Whist." The most notable feature of this game is that it must be played in complete silence. It is not surprising, therefore, that it failed to find favour

at Court, for the English love conversation above all things, and excel in repartee, apt quotation, and madrigal-making. But it is curious that although the Court is highly cultivated, and although the courtiers speak elegantly both in English and Latin, and make verses and madrigals in these languages, there appears at the present time to be no English literature at all. Our Ambassador tells me that among learned circles in London, although there are certain philosophers of merit, such as Hobbes, there remain but few traces of the art of letters for which England was once famous. The only writers whose memory still subsists to a certain degree are Bacon, Morus, Buchanan, and in the last century a certain Miltonius who acquired an evil notoriety by his scurrilous and seditious pamphlets. Letters have deserted England and given way to music and painting. The art of madrigal-making, which is cultivated at Court with assiduity and exquisite skill, belongs, of course, to music.

What has struck me most since I have been here is the beauty of the English women; they are all being painted at this moment by a painter called Lely; he is an accomplished artist, but he does not succeed in rendering the personality of the people he paints, and his pictures are all alike. Most of

these ladies speak French not only with correctness but with elegance; some of them, such as Miss Stewart, for instance, speak French better than their own language. Others, on the other hand, are so unfamiliar with our manners and customs that they seem to imagine that a Frenchman must necessarily be half-witted, and address him in a kind of broken language such as nurses and mothers use to their babies.

Lady Hyde is remarkable, even in England, for her grace and her wit. Her hands are delicate and her feet astonishing. She is surrounded by the wits of the Court, and one evening after supper she organized a kind of tournament of wit. It was thus: we all sat round the gaming table, but instead of playing we had set before us counters made of mother-of-pearl, on each one of which a letter of the alphabet was worked in gold. These were placed face downwards and turned up in turn; each player who turned up a letter was obliged to compose a line of a sonnet beginning with the letter in question. The game would have proved highly successful had not Lord Rochester caused some annoyance by ending the sonnet, which had up till then been delicate and tender, with an unexpectedly crude and uncourtly expression, which,

while it tickled the mirth of some of the company, offended our sensitive hostess.

Miss Stewart is childish and frivolous. She laughs at everything and everybody. She has a passion for those games which are usually played only by children of twelve and thirteen; such as, for instance, Blind Man's Buff, and even when at cards the play is at its highest, she builds houses and castles with the cards, and forces everybody to join in the pastime. She is encouraged in her gaiety and her frivolity by the Duke of Buckingham, who sings agreeably, and has a wonderful talent for mimicking, not without a certain spice of malice, the voices and the tricks of his friends.

Play is everywhere high, and at every "boulingrin" there is a pavilion where refreshments are sold—liquors such as cyder, hydromel, sparkling ale, and Spanish wine. There is a race of men called "Rooks" who meet together to smoke and to drink. They are what we should call grooms in France, and they always have about them enough money to lend to those who have lost at play; they are themselves so skilful at games of hazard, especially at one particular game which is played with three cards, that no one who plays with them wins. The Chevalier de Grammont once tried his

luck with them at dice, and, strange to say, the first time he played he won. They begged him to continue the game. This he refused to do, in spite of the many well-turned compliments they paid to his prowess.

The English are somewhat concerned at this moment at the state of their Navy, which they say leaves much to be desired. There are many politicians who are in favour of building an increased number of ships, but it appears that this cannot be done without grievously taxing the rich, who are already overtaxed. The Duke of Buckingham told me yesterday that if the taxes were to be in any way increased he would be obliged to dismiss his gardener and his Groom of the Chambers. Besides which, he assured me that this agitation in favour of an increased Navy was entirely due to a foolish fear of the Dutch, a fear which he said was utterly groundless, for it was inconceivable that the Dutch could wish to invade England; moreover, if they did so they would be defeated by the English Navy, such as it was.

PETER THE GREAT

Letter from an English Architect

St. Petersburg, *July*, 1715.

Dear Sir,

Although it is almost six weeks ago that I arrived at St. Petersburg, I have not until this moment had leisure to write you my impressions. And now before I impart these to you I must advert to a conversation which I had in Berlin with X——, who, as you know, spent many years in Russia, before the accession of the present Czar, and who is an eminent Russian scholar. He assured me that in entering the Russian service at the present moment I was doing a foolish and perilous thing. Russia, he said, was on the eve of a grave crisis, which might very probably lead to the dismemberment of the nation. This was owing to the character of the present Sovereign. The Czar was inspired with inordinate ambition and blind obstinacy; he was, moreover, pursued by a demon of restlessness, and a desire to change and reform everything

that was old. This love of improvement was no doubt in itself a laudable ambition; yet in view of the peculiar circumstances of the case, the ignorance of the great mass of Russians, the fundamental conservatism of the educated class, the deficiency and the inadequacy of all necessary material and instruments, the designs of the Czar were akin to madness.

He was attempting to make bricks without straw, and this could only have one result—the disruption of the kingdom of Russia and the consequent rise of a large and powerful Poland. Poland would once again reduce Russia to servitude, and all civilized Europe would once more be revolted by the spectacle of civil and religious tyranny. Moreover, a powerful Poland was, as far as all European countries were concerned, far less to be desired than a powerful Russia. I will comment on these remarks in due time. At present I must resume my narrative.

On arriving at St. Petersburg I went straight to the Summer Palace. I was told that the Czar had gone to Cronstot. He had left orders that I was to follow him thither as soon as I arrived, in a snow which was waiting to convey the Dutch Minister. It was a fine, sultry day when we

started from St. Petersburg. I was much impressed by the sight of the city, which possesses already many thousands of houses and some fine churches and palaces. We started with a fair wind, but soon a storm arose, and our condition was the more perilous owing to the lack of experience of the captain and the mate. The Dutch Minister was prostrate with sea-sickness, and upon his asking whether there was any chance of escape—and he seemed, such were his pains, to hope for a negative answer—the captain, who was facing the emergency by doing nothing at all, kept on repeating in a soothing voice the word *Nichevo* (which means "all is well") "we shall arrive." All seemed to be very far from well. The mate, when consulted, folded his hands together and said *Bog Znaet*, which means "God knows." At last, after two days and three nights, which we spent without fire or provisions, we arrived at Cronstot. We were forthwith bidden to the Czar's pleasure-house, Peterhof, on the coast of Ingria, whither a fair wind took us without further mishap.

We were at once taken into the Czar's presence. Anything less like the state and formal etiquette of Paris, Berlin, or Madrid, it would be difficult to imagine. To speak of the simplicity of the Czar

would be to understate my meaning. He seemed to be divested not only of the formality of sovereigns, but of the ordinary convention and reserve which unwittingly hang over every human being like a cloak. He greeted us as if he had known us all his life, and as if he were continuing a conversation but lately interrupted. His dress—which was dark, plain, and sober—his demeanour, his manner, were not only free from all trace of pomp but would have struck one as simple in a common sailor. And yet the overwhelming mastery and intelligence and power of the man were instantly apparent in the swiftness of his look and the stamp of his countenance. It was clear from the first moment that he was a man who went straight to the point and had the knack of eliminating and casting aside the unessential and the superfluous with the quick decision with which a skilful gardener removes dead flowers from a tree with his garden knife.

This was evident when speaking of the concern he had felt for us owing to the storm. The Dutch Minister launched out into a diffuse narrative. The Czar at once seized on the essential fact that the skipper was incapable and deftly changed the subject, keeping the garrulous Minister charmed all

the while. He welcomed me to Russia and said that he had been awaiting my arrival with impatience, as he had much work for me to do. "But we will talk of that later," he said, "at present you must be hungry."

We then followed him into another room, where we were presented to the Czarina. The Czarina, who is of humble origin, has that peculiar grace, that intangible beauty and charm, which baffle verbal description and cause the painter to burn his canvas. She is the embodiment of spontaneous and untaught refinement, and her manner, like that art which consists in concealing all art, proceeds from the certain instinct which bids her make the right gestures and say the right word without either effort or forethought.

We proceeded to dinner, which was served punctually at noon. The first course consisted of many cold meats, followed by a second hot course, and then by a third course of fruits. During dinner we were all of us plied with Tockay wine. His Majesty himself partook of it freely but forebore drinking too much; but we by the end of the meal could scarcely stand, and the Dutch Minister was obliged nevertheless to empty a bowl holding a full quart of brandy which he received at the Czarina's

hand. The result was he rolled under the table, and was carried away by two men to a quiet place where he could sleep.

The Czar laughed and talked without ceasing, and asked many pertinent questions concerning England and Scotland, and was thoroughly posted in all the latest news. Talking of the Stuarts, he said they would never return, because, apart from their talent for mismanagement, the English people did not feel strongly enough on the subject to make a rising in their favour, however popular such a restoration would be if it could be effected by a *Deus ex machina*. The Stuarts, he said, had always had the people on their side and the oligarchy against them. He blamed the English people with regard to Ireland, saying the English had neither annihilated the Irish nor made them happy. He compared this to the action of the Poles in Russia in the past, and pointed to the result.

After dinner I retired to sleep, but at four o'clock we were awakened and brought back to the Czar's presence. He gave us each a hatchet and orders to follow him. He led us into a wood of young trees, where he marked a walk of a hundred yards to be cut to the seashore. He fell to work, and we (there were seven of us) followed; (the

Dutch Minister found such a work in his half-dazed condition hard) and in three hours' time the path was cut. At supper, to which we were bidden, more Tockay was consumed, and the Czar joked with the Dutch Minister about the violent exercise he had caused him to take. We retired early, but about eight the next morning, I was bidden to Court to partake of breakfast, which consisted, instead of coffee or tea, of large cups of brandy and pickled cucumbers.

After dinner we were taken on board the Czar's vessel. The Czarina and her ladies sought the cabin, but the Czar remained with us in the open air, laughing and joking. A strong wind was blowing, which in two hours became a gale, and the Czar himself took the helm and showed the utmost skill in working a ship as well as huge strength of body. After being tossed about for seven hours we at last reached the port of Cronstot, where the Czar left us with the words: "Good night, gentlemen. I fear I have carried the jest too far."

The next day I returned to St. Petersburg, and was lodged in the Summer Palace so as to be near the Czar. The Czar sent for me early in the morning, and discoursed for two hours on various build-

ings he wished me to design. He went into every detail, and soon showed me that he was as skilled an architect as he was a sailor. He also talked on various other subjects, including theology, mechanics, music, painting, the English Navy, and the German Army. England, he said, was his model as far as the Navy was concerned, Germany for the Army, and France for architecture. At the same time he was not disposed slavishly to follow any particular models, and force on his people those details of any system which might not be in concord with the genius of the Russian character. It is undeniable that the Germans have far the best system of military discipline, he said, but it would be quite impossible to get Russian soldiers to act with the mathematical precision of the Prussians.

"I adopt the system as far as I can, and adapt it to my material. That is why I get as many Scotch officers as I can, and English architects, because it is difficult to make a Frenchman understand that Russia isn't France, and that a Russian workman must work in his own way."

I had not been in St. Petersburg long before I realized that X——'s forebodings are baseless. He is right in saying that the Czar is ambitious. He is right in saying that he is actuated by rest-

lessness, if by restlessness he means a ceaseless and indefatigable energy. He is right in saying that the Czar's materials are bad and scanty and that the Czar thus had to make bricks without straw. He is right in saying that the Russians are fundamentally conservative and regard all reforms with distrust.

But what he has not realized is this, that a man of genius can make bricks without straw. The Czar has proved it. He has built St. Petersburg on a marsh. He has built a fleet and organized an army. He has made palaces, schools, academies, factories, and dockyards, and he has inspired others with his fever for work. Like all great workers he never gives one an impression of hurry. He seems always to have leisure to see whom he wants, to have his say out, and to indulge in recreation when he feels so inclined. He rises every morning at four o'clock. From eleven to twelve he receives petitions from all ranks of his subjects, who have access to him during that hour. He dines at twelve o'clock. At one he sleeps for an hour; the afternoon and evening he spends in diversions, and at ten he goes to bed.

He seems to delight in finding out a project which appears to be impossible, and in achieving

it forthwith. No scheme is too large for him to devise, and no detail of it too small for him to attend to. He has the gift of discovering any useful scrap of knowledge either in men or books. At his balls and entertainments, which he now gives at the Summer Palace or, on extraordinary occasions, at the Senate House, all degrees of persons are invited. Different tables are arranged in separate rooms for the clergy, the officers of the Army, those of the Navy, the merchants, the shipbuilders, the foreign skippers. After dinner the Czar goes from room to room and talks to everybody, especially with the masters of foreign trading vessels. The Dutch and English skippers treat him with familiarity, and call him by no other name than Skipper Peter, which delights him, and the whole time he marks down any points which interest him in a note-book.

In conversing with these men, various in rank and condition, he never appears to be courting popularity or to be ingeniously fencing with subjects of which he is ignorant. On the contrary, he makes it manifest that he is talking on a subject because it interests him and because he is thoroughly acquainted with it. And any man who is an expert at any trade or profession cannot converse with

him for a few moments without realizing that he knows what he is talking about and that his knowledge is the result of practical experience. He has a hatred of baseless theory, a contempt for convention, and an insatiable passion for fact and reality. He has no respect for inherited rank or for the glory of lineage; merit is to him the only rank. He will at a moment's notice, should he think it necessary, degrade a nobleman into a peasant or make a pastry-cook into a Minister. Indeed he has done this in the case of Prince Menzikoff.

It is useless to pretend that he is as popular with the Russian people as he is with foreigners. Many of the ignorant peasantry regard him as the Antichrist, and they worship his utterly worthless son, the Czarevitch, because they consider that he respects and embodies their ancient customs. In spite of this there is no danger that what the Czar has accomplished will be overturned in the immediate future. He has done something which cannot be undone, like putting salt into a pudding. Moreover, his genius and his versatility, his extraordinarily varied talents, are based on a soundness of judgement, a level-headedness and a sanity of instinct which, while they lead him to do things which are seemingly impossible, justify him, in

that success is achieved, and prevent him from undertaking what, owing either to the backwardness of the population or the temper of popular feeling, would in reality and of necessity end in failure. He knows exactly where to draw the line. In a speech he made to the Senate some time ago he said that the ancient seat of all sciences was Greece, whence they were expelled and dispersed over Europe and hindered from penetrating further than into Poland. The transmigration of sciences was like the circulation of the blood, and he prognosticated that they would some time or other quit their abode in Western Europe and settle for some centuries in Russia, and afterwards perhaps return to their original home in Greece. In the meantime he recommended to their practice the Latin saying *ora et labora*.

Now what the Czar has already achieved is that he has made such a circulation possible. He has broken down the barrier which was between Russia and Western Europe, and let in to the great veins of his country a new drop of blood which nothing can either expel or destroy.

"HAMLET" AND DR. DODD

Letter from a Frenchman, translated from the French

LONDON, *June* 28, 1777.

Sir,

It is now three days since I arrived in London. I am still bewildered by the noise of the carriages and overwhelmed by an admiration which any foreigner must feel when for the first time he beholds the streets, the lanterns, and the pavements of London. Nothing could be better than these three things. The streets are wide; the manner in which they are lit up at night, and the commodity of the ways made for foot-passengers so that they may be safe from vehicles in the most dangerous thoroughfares are astonishing. There is nothing to compare with it in Europe. It is only in London that such thoroughfares and such superb nightly illumination are to be found, and where so careful an

attention is paid to the safety of the public. And all this decoration, and indeed half of the city, are not more than twenty years old!

I have already become an adopted Englishman. I drink my tea twice a day, I eat my "tostes" well buttered. I read my Gazette scrupulously every morning and every evening. I have been waiting with impatience for one of those plays to be performed which have obtained universal applause, such as those, for instance, of the "divine" Shakespeare. I have at last been rewarded. Yesterday I read on the playbill (*affiche*), "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." So I said to my sister, who is with me, "We must go and see 'Hamlet.'" We set out, therefore, for Covent Garden.

We had intended to take tickets for the boxes, but there were none left. We tried to get into the first gallery (our *premières loges*), but there were no seats to be had there. I proposed then that we should try the upper gallery, but we were advised not to. There remained the pit. This was also full. I remained standing, and my sister obtained half a seat at the end of a crowded bench. It was all most brilliant. The house, which is square and partly gray and partly gilded, without harmony of ornament or design, is not imposing in itself. But the

crowd of spectators, the quantity of lights, the rapt attention of the coloured crowd, make a striking *ensemble*.

No sooner had we seated ourselves than to my extreme astonishment something fell on to my sister's hat. It turned out to be a piece of orange peel. Here I must mention that an essential part of a lady's *coiffure* in London is a flat round hat, which is a most ingenious device of coquetry. It heightens beauty and diminishes ugliness; it confers grace and play to the features. It is impossible to tell you all the varied effects an Englishwoman can derive from her hat. Curiously enough, the hat is not worn on State occasions, and neither at Court nor at assemblies, nor even in the *premières loges* of the theatre, and its place is taken by French feathers. I was just wondering whence the piece of orange peel had proceeded when I saw a man come from behind the scenes with a large broom in his hand. Knowing that Shakespeare makes use of everything that pertains to human life, I thought that "Hamlet" was going to begin by a sweeping scene. I was mistaken. It was only a servant who was cleaning the front of the stage, which I now noticed was covered with the remains of the feast of oranges and apples which was taking place in the upper

gallery, and of which my sister had received a small sample on her hat.

At last the play began. Not having the good fortune to understand the English language, I could not follow one word of the dialogue. But I am told that the play gains rather than loses by being translated, though our Anglomaniacs say it is untranslatable. But I have now read the play in M. Letourneur's translation. The play is sheer madness—nay, more, it is the wildest and most extravagant thing that a madman could devise in a fit of delirium. Towards the end of the play only six characters remain alive, and they all die a violent death. The King and the Queen are poisoned on the stage. Hamlet, after having assassinated the Lord Chamberlain and his son, dies himself of a poisoned wound. His lady-love throws herself out of the window and is drowned; the Ghost, who enlivens this farrago of horrors, was poisoned himself (in the ear).

Lest the spectators should be overcome by so many murders, the "divine" Shakespeare has given them moments of relief in the person of the Lord Chamberlain, who is a coarse buffoon, and the conversation of the grave-diggers, who, while they crack their insipid jests, dig a real grave, throw real

black earth on to the stage, of the same colour and substance as that which is found in churchyards, full of real bones and real skulls. In order to give an effect of reality, there are some large skulls and some small ones. Hamlet recognizes one as having belonged to a clown whom he knew. He seems to caress it, and to moralize over it. And these horrors, and the still more disgusting pleasantry, seemed vastly to please the upper gallery, the pit, and even the boxes. The people who were near me and behind me stood up on their seats and craned forward to look, and one man, in order to see better, lifted himself up by pulling my hair.

What strikes me most in thinking of this performance is the contrast that exists in England between the mildness and the leniency of the English customs and legislation in criminal matters, and the barbarity and savagery of the entertainments in their playhouses. On the same morning that "Hamlet" was performed, the execution of Dr. Dodd was carried out at Tyburn. Doctor Dodd was a minister of the Church, highly respected for his eloquence. He had been *Aumonier* to the King, and cherished the ambition of becoming a bishop. With this object, he had caused his wife to offer the sum of a thousand guineas to the wife

of a Minister. The transaction was discovered and Dr. Dodd was dismissed from his post, but still retained a living. He had been the tutor of a son of a man who is well known here, Lord Chesterfield, and in the name of the young lord he signed a bond of four thousand guineas. This was also discovered, and it constitutes what they here call the crime of forgery, for which Dr. Dodd was condemned to death. In spite of many petitions the sentence was carried out yesterday, June 27. I assisted at the execution. A stranger accustomed to the terror-inspiring machinery, to the noise and fuss with which, in the rest of Europe, the decrees of justice are executed, and which are designed to serve as a terrible example, would be astonished at the manner in which it is done here. Here there are no soldiers, no representatives of the army, no outward signs of ferocity, no preliminary torture. Here that humanity, which the law seems to forget from the moment the judge has uttered the word guilty—by letting a long delay elapse between the pronouncement of the sentence and the execution—reappears as soon as the prison opens its doors and delivers the prisoner to the sheriffs, who are charged with carrying out the sentence. The sheriffs are not military men; they have no mer-

cenaries under them, but merely a certain number of constables, ordinary *bourgeois*, whose only uniform consists in a long stick painted and partially gilded.

The victim, bound, without constraint, by the cord which is to hang him, is seated on a cart draped in black, or he may obtain leave to use a carriage, and this is what was done yesterday. The carriage passed slowly up Oxford Street, one of the longest and broadest streets of London. The prisoner had no escort, save a small number of constables on foot, and some sheriffs on horseback. He is condemned by the law, it is the law which leads him to death. The officers show no signs, either of threatening or fear, lest the people should oppose themselves to a severity which has their safety for object.

The immense crowd which fills the streets, especially in a case like this one, which has been so much talked about, maintains a respectful silence. When they arrived at Tyburn Dr. Dodd left his carriage and mounted on a cart which stopped under the horizontal beam of the gallows. The executioner then appeared, untied the rope, and attached it to the transverse beam. The victim conversed with a minister of the Church, who recalled his crime, and spoke of the necessity of expiation. After a short pause, the executioner

covered the victim's head with a handkerchief, which he drew down to his chin. The first sheriff made a sign; the executioner touched the horse, the cart went on, and the work of execution was thus almost imperceptibly accomplished. After the body has remained hanging for an hour it is cut down and restored to the relatives of the deceased. He is then no longer a culprit, but a citizen who regains the rights he had forfeited by crime. His memory is not held in obloquy; for instance, the brother of Dr. Dodd succeeded to his living on the recommendation of Lord Chesterfield.

Now to return to the playhouse and "Hamlet." How is it that a people which abhors bloodshed in general, which fears murder, to whom poison and assassination are unknown, and which carries regard even towards the criminal to the extent I have described, can take pleasure in theatrical spectacles as barbarous and revolting as their own? The executions at London seem but games. The tragedies of the playhouse, on the other hand, are butcheries, causing even such spectators as are familiar with bloodshed to shudder.

It is only fair to say that those Englishmen who have read and travelled are slightly embarrassed when a foreigner, who has heard the extravagant

praises paid to the "divine" Shakespeare, comes to London to see for himself the works of this genius. They tell us that the populace are the lords of the English stage, and that they must needs be pleased. It is their depraved taste, we are told, which maintains these spectacles which would empty the theatres in any other country. I am quite ready to believe it; but then it is only drunken sailors who should be asked to admire Shakespeare, since it is only by drunken sailors that his altars are supported.

On the other hand, I cannot help adding that educated society shares to a certain extent the prejudice of the rabble, since it shares their pleasures. The boxes are always full when Shakespeare is on the bill, and last night the play was well received; the disgusting jokes and the extravagant ravings duly listened to and applauded by men, women, lawyers, merchants, lords, and sailors. One and all they seemed to breathe with delight the obnoxious vapours of that earth which is made up of the remains of corpses. Compare this deliberate brutality, which educated men have tried to justify in books, with the mildness of the penal laws and the real executions, and explain it if you can! As for me, I will not visit the playhouse again until the question is solved.

HERR MÜLLER

Letter from Sir Richard C—— to his Cousin

ROME, *January* 4, 1787.

I have been here a fortnight and have been able more or less to look round. I wrote a long letter to Horace yesterday in which I described at great length the journey from Venice, so I will not repeat to you what I have already written to him.

Rome is a great deal altered since I was here last, ten years ago. It is being spoilt, and such damage as the Goths and Vandals left undone is now being accomplished by the modern architects. I am afraid that by the time the next generation is grown up the beautiful Rome that we have known and loved will have entirely disappeared, and that when our sons and daughters make the pilgrimage which we looked upon as the reward of our studies and the greatest privilege of our youth, they will find a new city, elegant no doubt, and not without grandeur,

but devoid of that special charm, that rare and solemn dignity, which clothed the city as we knew it. Of course, certain of the monuments and works of art will always remain, and nothing can prevent Nature from performing her careless miracles. No defacing hand will be allowed to touch the trees that grow in the Coliseum, or to desecrate the verdure and the luxuriant vegetation which is allowed to run riot in the baths of Caracalla. Again, no modern artist will be allowed to lay hands on the grassy Forum, or to intrude upon the Gardens of the Borghese Palace which remind one of the fabled meadows and parterres of Elysium. But it is in the body of the city that the barbarians of the present day are allowed to commit their impious sacrilege, and it is not only a melancholy and bitter task to trace the remains of antiquity in the Rome of to-day, but it is even difficult to recognize in what now exists the city as she was when we were last here together.

The weather has so far not been very favourable. The *sirocco* is blowing, and daily brings with it a quantity of rain, but it is warm, warmer than it ever is in London. Rome is, I need scarcely tell you, very full of visitors at this moment, and it is especially crowded with our dear countrymen, whom I sedu-

lously try to avoid, for I have not come to Rome, as do so many of our friends, for the purpose of continuing London life, and of hearing and helping to increase the scandal and the tittle-tattle with which we are only too familiar. It is for this reason that I have thus far shunned society, and the only people I have seen are artists and students, of whom there are many. Most of them are Germans, and several of these have received me with great civility and kindness, and afforded me much useful assistance in visiting the museums and conducting my trifling researches.

So far I have not seen much. The new museum is a very fine institution, and possesses many treasures. I have visited the ruins of the palace of the Caesars, the Coliseum, which impressed me more than ever by its size and solemnity, the Sistine Chapel, and St. Peter's, on to the roof of which I climbed in order to enjoy the view.

The theatres are opened once more, and a few nights ago I went to the opera. Anfossi is here, and they gave "Alessandro nel Indie" (which is tedious) followed by a ballet representing the Siege and Fall of Troy, which I greatly enjoyed. I have also seen, since I have been here, Goldoni's "Locandiera." As you know, all parts here are played by men;

and all the dancers in the ballet are men also. They act with ease and naturalness, and their facial play is especially remarkable.

From the moment I arrived in Rome until yesterday I was oppressed and somewhat saddened by the feeling—whether this was the result of the sirocco or of the shock of seeing so many unexpected changes I do not know—that I was not in any way in touch with Rome. I never seemed to say to myself "This is Rome indeed!" nor to experience that peculiar charm which I remember feeling so acutely when I was here last. It was in vain that I brooded over the ruins, admired the monuments of antiquity, and the masterpieces of the Italian painters; it was in vain that I lingered on the Palatine in the twilight, or roamed in the Baths of Diocletian. I admired with my reason, but I did not feel with my heart as before. Something was wanting. But yesterday the magic returned.

I went for a walk by myself along the Appian Way to the tomb of Metella. It was a gray day; it had been raining nearly all the morning, but by the time I started the rain had ceased, though a layer of high, piled-up clouds remained; the air was mild and almost sultry.

I walked along the Appian Way, and the desola-

tion of the Campagna, with its fragments of broken arches, its ruined aqueducts and the distant hills, which on a day like this seem curiously near and distinct, came over me. In the distance, above Rome itself, the clouds had slightly lifted, and St. Peter's was lit up by a watery gleam of light. I cannot describe to you the beauty and the melancholy of the scene.

All at once, while I was standing by the grassy plain and looking towards Rome, I became aware of a plaintive sound: a Roman shepherd boy dressed in sheepskins was tootling one or two monotonous notes on a wooden pipe. His music seemed to complete the landscape, and to express the very spirit of the Campagna, which brings home to me the Rome of ancient days more poignantly and more nearly than all monuments and museums.

The veil which had hung over me during all these days was abruptly lifted. The old spell and the old charm returned, and I could say to myself: "This is Rome! I have at last found what I was seeking."

I had remained for some time musing, when I suddenly noticed that a man was sitting not far from me, seated on a stool and making a sketch in water-colour of a broken archway. He had been

there the whole time, but I had not noticed him. I do not know why, but I felt a desire to speak to some one, and I approached him and asked in French if he could tell me the time. He answered me civilly, and by his accent I perceived that he was a German, one of the artists no doubt who are here so numerous, although I did not remember having seen him before. He was extremely handsome—I should say between thirty and forty—and though his face was young, his eyes had a penetrating sadness about them, an almost tragic expression, as though they had sounded bitter depths of experience.

We fell into conversation, and he told me that he was a German, that his name was Müller, and that he was spending some months in Rome. I said that I presumed he was an artist; he replied that he was only now learning the rudiments of the art of drawing, but that he had begun too late, and that he would never be anything but a dilettante.

As he spoke he folded up his sketching-book, for it was already too dark to draw, and we walked towards the city together. He said he had never been to Rome before, but that he had been steeped ever since his youth in the culture of anti-

quity, and the monuments and the pictures which he had seen since his arrival were to him like old friends with whom he had frequently corresponded, but whom he had never seen in the flesh. But all previous study, he said, as far as Rome was concerned, struck him as being ineffectual as soon as he arrived in the city, because he was sure that it is only in Rome itself that one can prepare oneself to study Rome. He had not been here many weeks, but so far, the three things which had impressed him most were the Rotunda, which he considered the thing most *spiritually* great he had seen, St. Peter's, and the Apollo Belvidere, which he thought, as a work of genius, was the greatest of all; for although he had seen innumerable casts of this work, and indeed possessed one himself, it was as though he had never seen the statue before.

I told him that he was to be congratulated on never having seen Rome before, since his impressions would not be marred by the memories of a Rome more unspoiled and more charming. He said that he was only too keenly aware of the havoc which the modern architects had wrought, and that he feared that in twenty years' time Rome would be unrecognizable.

"But perhaps," he added, "we are mistaken

Rome has an assimilative power so great that it is able to suffer any amount of alteration, vandalism, superstructure, and addition, without losing anything of its eternal character and divinity. In Rome there is a continuity with which nothing can interfere." And he added that he thought there was something in the atmosphere, the vegetation, the very grass and the weeds of the place which acted like a spell and softened what was ugly and modern, reconciled all differences, and reduced all discords into an eternal harmony which was the genius of the city.

We talked of other matters also, and I found that he was well versed in ancient and modern literature, and had an intimate knowledge of English. He admired the plays of Shakespeare; with Dryden he was less well acquainted, but he possessed a knowledge very striking in a foreigner of the untrodden byways of our literature. For instance, he told me that he had read the plays of Marlowe with great interest, especially the tragical history of Dr. Faustus. This, he told me, was a favourite theme for German writers; in the last few years there had been almost a hundred plays written on the subject.

I asked him if he wrote himself. He said he

had done so, and had begun many books, but that he found it difficult to finish them.

"I have dabbled," he said, "in art, in science, and in literature; they all interest me equally. But I am affected by the malady of our age, which is dilettantism, and I fear I shall be nothing but a dilettante all my life."

I asked him if he was engaged on any literary labour at present. He said he was thinking of writing a poem on the subject of Dr. Faustus, and that he had indeed already written fragments of it. I expressed my surprise that he should choose a subject which he had himself told me had already been used by a multitude of writers. He then smiled, and said:

"Everything has been thought and everything has been said already. What we have to do is to think it and to say it again. The Greeks," he went on, "never bothered themselves to search for new subjects. They wrote new plays on old themes. Likewise many generations of painters found sufficient subject-matter in the Madonna and Child. I mean," he said, "to follow their example. Dr. Faustus shall be for me what the Madonna and Child were to them."

We separated at the gate, after a most pleasant

conversation. Herr Müller expressed a wish to see me again, and he told me that he was staying with an artist called Tishbein.

January 6.

I received this morning your letter dated December 18. I shall stay here until the Carnival, and then to Naples, where, they say, Vesuvius is in eruption. The German artist whom I met the other day turns out to be a celebrity. His real name is *Goethe*, and he is the author of "The Sorrows of Werther," a book which you have probably not read, but of which you must certainly have heard, for it created a considerable stir about (I think) twelve years ago.

HEINE IN PARIS

Fragment of an unpublished letter from Lady G—— to Lord C——

PARIS, 183—.

My dear Uncle H——,

We arrived in Paris last night. . . . (Here I omit a passage regarding the children of a family some of whom still survive.) Last night we spent a very agreeable evening at Madame Jaubert's. There were a great many people present, for we had been invited to meet the celebrated Bellini. There were many people I did not know, and many others who were introduced to me whose names did not reach me. Signor Bellini himself came early. His appearance is charming; he is just like a fat child, pink and white, amiable and good-natured, and not in the least conceited or pretentious. Soon afterwards Prince and Princess Belgiojoso arrived. This was the first time I had set eyes on the Princess. Her beauty and the grace of her person have not, indeed, been exaggerated. She resembles a classical statue,

but her face has an expression which recalls later and more romantic times. Her features are regular, but there is something mysterious and rather *strange* about her face and her dark orbs. Her hair is like ebony, but her skin is very white, and she smiles with a kind of wearied look, as though she were a Chinese idol. Her hands and her hair are most beautiful, and she walks into a room as if there could not be the slightest doubt that she is the most beautiful woman there. And this is true, although perhaps she is too slender. She was elegantly dressed in violet velvet, trimmed with fur, which showed her graceful figure and disappeared in the folds of a black skirt; she wore a black lace mantilla, which she took off when she came into the room. She talks well, and her voice is musical, but, at the same time, it has a cold ring like a crystal glass being tapped. Of course one could not help seeing that she was agreeable and accomplished, but I could not restrain a wicked wish to see her dethroned from her pedestal. It is impossible to say that she gives herself airs, but at the same time there is something *irritating* about her beauty.

As soon as they arrived, Madame Jaubert took the Prince to the pianoforte and said he must sing

a duet with Madame de Vergennes, and that it should be the duet out of the "Pirate," as Bellini was there. The Prince said that he was loth to sing before the Master, but Madame Jaubert appealed to Bellini, and they both succeeded in persuading him. Madame de Vergennes herself accompanied at the pianoforte. The Prince has a real tenor voice, his *méthode* is excellent, and they sang the duet as it should be sung. Madame Jaubert said to me that if you ask musicians to a party you must let them play an active part at once in public, but if, on the other hand, you invite politicians and literary men it is best to place them in corners and let them talk.

Bellini was childish about the music: he danced with delight when they had finished, and clapped his hands and said: "Do sing it again!" Somebody suggested their singing a French song, but Bellini said: "No, no, please sing some more of my own music: I do enjoy it so much more, and you know it is much better." So they sang something from "Norma," and after that the trio from "The Comte Ory," in which the Prince, M. du Tillet, and a young girl took part, with Madame de Vergennes at the pianoforte.

When the trio was over, Madame Jaubert in-

terrupted the music, although we were all anxious to hear more, I myself among others; but she took me aside and whispered to me that you must always stop music *before* people have had enough, because the moment they have one second too much of it they will go away with the impression that they have spent a tiresome evening. I think she was right. But there was a young man there, a M. de Musset—he writes—who was both obstinate and persistent, and never ceased for a moment asking for more. Madame Jaubert was firm and turned a deaf ear to him. This young man was introduced to me: he is good-looking and well-mannered, but sulky and overdressed. He is in love with Princess Belgiojoso, and this I suppose affected him on this occasion because she was paying but scant attention to him, and talked incessantly to Major Fraser, who was there.

Gradually the greater part of the people took their departure, and we all sat down round the table in a small room and talked about table-turning and spirits. Then, I forget how, the conversation turned upon caricatures, and Princess Belgiojoso said, with a lovely smile, that nobody had ever been able to caricature her. Upon which M. de Musset instantly accepted the challenge and said he would

make a caricature of the Princess at once. He fetched a scrap-book which was in the room, and a pencil, and on a blank page, drew, in four strokes, her face and figure in profile, exaggerating her thinness and making an enormous black eye. It exactly resembled her; we all craned over the table to look at it, and she took up the book and said in a tone of the utmost indifference: "Really, M. de Musset, it is unfair that you should have all the talents," and she shut the book.

Madame Jaubert took the book and put it away, and I heard her whisper to M. de Musset: "You have burnt your boats." He turned round and looked at the Princess and his eyes filled with tears, and at that moment I felt that I could have gladly chastised her.

After that we went in to supper. Almost everybody had gone; the only people who remained were Prince and Princess Belgiojoso, M. de Musset, Major Fraser, Mlle. de Rutières, a lovely Créole, the Comte d'Alton-Shée, Bellini, and Herr Heine, the German writer. I sat between him and Prince Belgiojoso. M. de Musset was on Madame Jaubert's left, Bellini and the Princess were sitting opposite us.

Herr Heine, like all Germans, is a trifle tiring

and long-winded; of course he is cultivated and accomplished, and they say he has written most interesting books, but I cannot read a word of German. He talks French well, but he is heavy and continues a subject long after one has sufficiently discussed it. This is so different from the French, who skate over every topic so lightly and never dwell too long on any subject, and understand what you want to say before you have half said it. All the same, you see at once that he is an interesting man, and every now and then he says something truly remarkable. He wears big spectacles, and his hair, which is very fair, is cut straight and is rather long and bunches over his low collar. He astonished everybody at supper by saying that the perpetual praise of Goethe and Byron tired him.

"I cannot understand you Parisians," he said, "when you talk about poetry. You go out of the way to search out and idolize all sorts of foreign poets when you have got a real native poet who is worth all these foreigners put together." Somebody said "Victor Hugo." "Nothing of the sort," he answered, "Victor Hugo is like a wheel which turns round and round in space without any intellectual cog-wheel. It is all words, words, words.

But he has no thought and no real feeling. He is screaming at the top of his voice about nothing."

"Then who is our great poet?" asked Madame Jaubert.

"Why, M. de Musset, of course," said Herr Heine.

We all laughed, and Madame Jaubert said it was a very pretty compliment. M. de Musset himself appreciated the joke quite as much as we did. But they say he really does write very well, rather in the same manner as Lord Francis Egerton.

M. de Musset remained sulky all through supper. Once or twice he said things across the table to Princess Belgiojoso, and she answered him as if she were an empty portfolio from which her real self was absent. We talked about music; Herr Heine said we were all barbarians as far as music was concerned; that it was true the Italians had a notion of what tune meant, but that the French, and especially the Parisians, did not know the difference between music and pastry. Somebody asked him how he could say such things after what we had heard that evening, and appealed to Bellini as to whether his music had ever been better interpreted.

"Ah, Bellini is a genius," said Herr Heine, and

he turned to him and added: "You are a great genius, Bellini, but you will have to expiate your genius by an early death. You are condemned to die. All great geniuses die young—very young, and you will die like Raphael and Mozart."

"Don't talk like that! for Heaven's sake don't say that!" said Bellini. "Please do not speak about death. Forbid him to talk like that," he said to the Princess.

"Perhaps my fears are groundless," Herr Heine said to the Princess. "Perhaps Bellini is not a genius after all. Besides which I have never heard a note of his music. I purposely came in this evening after it was all over. Is he a genius, Princess? What do you think?" Then he addressed himself again to Bellini: "Let us hope, my dear friend, that the world has made a mistake about you, and that you are not a genius after all. It is a bad thing to be. It is the gift of the wicked fairy. The good fairies have given you every other gift, the face of a cherub, the simplicity of a child, and the digestion of an ostrich. Let us hope the bad fairy did not come in and spoil it all by giving you genius."

Bellini laughed, but I suspect he did not appreciate the joke.

Princess Belgiojoso said that Herr Heine had no right to talk like that, for he was a poet himself.

"A poet, yes," he answered, "but not a genius. That is quite a different thing. I have never been accused of that, not even in my own country."

"But no man is a prophet in his own country," said Madame Jaubert.

"I am neither a prophet in my own country nor in any one else's," said Herr Heine. "My countrymen think I am frivolous, and the French think I am German and heavy. When I am with people like you they think I am an old professor, and when I am with professors they consider I am a frivolous *mondain*. When I am with Conservatives I am reckoned a Revolutionary, and by Revolutionaries I am considered a Reactionary. And when I am among the geniuses," he said, bowing with an ironical smile towards Bellini, "I become a pedant, a philosopher, and an ignoramus, almost as bad as M. Cousin."

"I wondered," said Madame Jaubert, "whether we should get through the evening without an allusion to M. Cousin."

"When I die," said Herr Heine, "I should like a stool to be placed on either side of my tomb,

with an inscription: 'Here lies a man who fell from Heaven between two stools.'"

"Geniuses," said M. de Musset . . .

(The end of the letter is missing)

P.S.—Bellini died suddenly to-day, so Herr Heine's prophecy came true.

SMITH MAJOR

Letter from a Private Schoolboy to a Public Schoolboy

St. James, *March* 4, 1885.

Dear Chinee,

Thanks awfuly for your letter. Eton must be jolly. I am glad I'm coming next term instead of at Micalmass. I shall be glad to leave this beastly hole. Wilson ma. has got a scholarship at Westminster and we were going to have a whole holiday extra only now its stopped worse luck! Yesterday the Head went to London and Mac sent a message to the First Div. to say we wernt to dig in Wilderness while the Head was away. Middleton brought the message and Wilson ma. told him to go and ask Mac if the message was genuine. Middleton thought he was ragging but he said: "You must take my message you Second Division squit if you don't I'll smack your head." So Middleton did. Mac was in an awful wax and sent for Wilson and asked him what he meant by

it. Wilson said it was a joke—he never thought Middleton would take the message.

When the Head came back we were all sent for after tea and there was a pi-jaw. Wilson had his First Div. privileges taken away for the rest of the term, and the Holiday was stopped.

The other day Mason missed three Guatemalar green parrots from his stamp collexion which he had swoped with Jackson for a toad. It was a beastly swindel because the toad was blind. Jackson who is always sucking up to Colly sneeked about the stamps and Mac said he knew it was someone in his Div. who had bagged the stamps and if the chap didn't own up he'd give the whole Div. an electric shock with his beastly battery.

Nobody owned up and the whole Second Div. had to join hands and they said Mac gave them the biggest shock theyd ever had. They didnt care but when it was over Middleton took the battery and threw it at Mac's head. We all thought hed be expelled but Mac didn't even sneek to the Head which was jolly decent of him. Mac can be awfully decent sometimes. After this Butler began to blub and then he said he had bagged the stamps but he meant to give them back. Mac told Butler he would find himself in Queer Street. We all

knew what that meant and didnt we just tell him! Nothing happened till Monday morning—then at reeding over the Head gave the Second Div. a jaw. He said they were mutinus and as bad as feenians—a feenian is a man who eats mustard with mutton—and that Butler was a thief and a traitor worse than Gladstone. Butler's pater is a liberal and some of the chaps say he 's a pal of Gladstone's and you can just think how the Head gave it him. Butler was swished. Simpson ma. and Pearse held him down and he squeeled like anything. The Head gave him fifteen from the shoulder which Gordon says is against the law. The Head had a glass of shery before the swishing.

Last week there was elexions going on. The Head got a notice from the Reding Club asking him to vote for the Lib. Wasnt he waxy! He read us out the letter at tea and jawed about the Church and State and said he would send back the letter with some coppers in it so that they would have to pay 8*d*. He said a radical was worse than a feenian. We were taken to the elexion and we all wore blue ribbons in our buttonholes. The Libs werent allowed to go. There are only seven but I believe Rowley's pater is a lib. although he swears he isnt.

Next week we are going to have athletic sports. I think I shall win the hurdel race and the high. Campbell's sister's name is Ann. Mason saw it at the end of a letter. Now we all call him Mary Ann. He's awfully sick about it.

There's a new chap called Gunter—a little beast. He's the cheekiest squit I've ever seen. Colly reported him for stealing sugar from the pantry and he was warned that if he did anything again he would be turned out of the choir and swiped although it was his first term. He *has* got cheek! He called Alston who is now top of the First Div. and captain of the Eleven, Piggy. Alston smacked his head. Fancy a Fourth Div. squit calling Alston piggy! Only the Head dares do that. He's awfully dirty too and never washes. Colly nabbed him smacking Melton mi. with a slipper and he was reported again so he was swished. The Head said it was the first time a new chap had ever been swished and afterwards he kicked the Head's straw hat through the Hall. We don't know yet what will happen but we think he'll be expeled.

I got into a row with Mac last week. While we were having tea he passed up that Bell and me were to stop talking. It never got to us and Mac

sent for me afterwards and said he knew what I was up to and I'd better look out or I'd find myself in Queer Street and he stopped me talking for a week.

The Head's reading us out an awfully good Book called "Tresure Island" and he's just finished a better one called "The Last Abot of Glasconbury." In the First Div. we do have to swot but in the First Set with Colly for maths and French we don't do a stroke of work. You should hear Lambert the frenchy cheek him. He goes up to him and asks him whether one ought to pronounce *yeux* youks or yeks and Colly doesn't dare pronounce it and says he ought to know. Then Lambert says "I've forgotten Sir I really don't know how to."

Yesterday in school we lit some patent pills which you burn and a snake comes out. Colly who is awfully blind asked what I was doing. I just had time to put it in my desk and said I had dropped my pen. Only one bung and he believed it! On Valentine's Day we sent Colly some sweets with biter alows inside them the stuff Mac puts on Watson's fingers when he bites his nails and he eat them.

Last week the Choir expedition came off. They

went to Reding to see the biskits made and then to Bath. If I was staying on next term I should be in the Eleven and get my flanels.

I forgot to tell you another awful row there's been. Hetherington who is a new chap sits next to Ferguson at dinner. Ferguson always bags his sausage at breakfast on Sundays. The other day the Matron found a letter in Ferguson's drawer written by Hetherington to Ferguson saying, "Dear Mister Ferguson. May I please have my sausage next Sunday. I'm so hungry." Ferguson was swished but he didn't care a rap. The Head says he's callus. I had an awfully good catty. I shot Hichens mi. in the back of his head by mistake and it bled awfuly. I thought I was in for it but the Head only bagged my catty for the rest of the term. We sent for a lot of snakes and green lizzards from Covent Garden and most of us bought some. I bought a Salamander but it died. Up to the Head one can't keep a toad in one's desk as we used to when we were in Colly's div. We still have Hashed Cat and Dead Fly pudding on Thursdays and nobody eats it and Mac still asks us why we arnt hungry. But I'm in training now for the sports and don't eat pudding at all. None of us do.

Please write and tell me about the sort of things a chap ought to know before going to Eton.

Yours ever,

P. Smith.

I'm Smith ma. now because my minor's here. He isnt bad.

FROM SATURDAY TO MONDAY

Letter from a Frenchwoman to an English Friend in Italy

HOTEL RITZ, LONDON.
Monday, June 1909.

My very dear Mary,

Here is the second tome of my first impressions of your country and your compatriots, which I promised to share with you. After the town the country! After one day of the London season, the English country life, the home, the Sunday at home! I have spent what you call a Saturday week-end, or a Sunday over. I will relate you all my adventures, and tell you in all frankness the good and the bad.

The sister of our dear Jackie invited me for the Saturday week-end to her beautiful *chateau*. By misfortune our dear Jackie was prevented from coming himself. He was kept all Sunday at the Foreign

Office to help to copy out telegrams! Is it not ignoble to spoil his holiday like that? Jackie, who has so little holiday, and who works so hard in Paris! His sister—perhaps you know her—is Lady Arlington, the wife of Sir Arlington. Their *chateau* is in Surrey. I had never been presented to her, but she wrote me most amiably and proposed three trains I might take. I chose the first, which arrived at half-past four, and found an auto at the station. After five minutes we arrived at the *chateau*, which is fine, but rather heavy: style, Louis XIV, outside. In the interior, a mixture—Queen Elizabeth, Vandyke, Maple, Modern style, Morris. *Je n'aime pas les mélanges.* But the English comfort always seduces me. The chintzes, the flowers, the nick-nacks, the thousand little nothings! Oh, it is charming! When I arrived I was shown into a large hall, all panelled (the panelling repainted) with some fine pictures (some Vandykes and a Sir Joshua) and some horrors. And a picture of Lady Arlington by a modern French painter; a nightmare like a coloured photograph! There was a large tea table and a buffet all prepared, but neither the master nor the mistress of the house there to receive me. In the corner of the room a pale young man was sitting reading a book. He got

up when I entered and looked embarrassed and said nothing. I did not know whether it was Sir Arlington or not. Then he said: "It has stopped raining; I think I will go out." And he abandoned me to my fate!

I waited five minutes, ten minutes, one quarter of an hour; then Lady Arlington entered. She is not like Jackie at all, but a blonde, very tall, handsome, and striking. She was dressed simply (but not well) in white serge, and I was embarrassed, because they had told me the English were all that is most elegant for Saturday week-ends, and I was very dressed, with a big hat, with a lace veil, and . . . (a page of technical details omitted). Lady Arlington was most amiable, and did not seem at all embarrassed at not having been there to receive me. She gave me tea.

Presently other guests entered; they had all been at Ascot Races—some of them staying in this house, others coming in their autos from neighbouring *chateaux*. They were all simply dressed, the men in *tennis*. I felt red with shame to be the only one dressed. Lady Arlington did not present one single person to me. Two pretty young women arrived (one a real Sir Joshua and the other a Greuze), and an older lady—very

handsome—who began to talk *politique*. Also a great many men, most of them bald although young; they all sat down and we drank tea. Then the master of the house arrived, a tall man with a beard, *très, très bien*, like a Vandyke. He seemed timid. Lady Arlington said to him: "You know Madame," and then stopped, as though she had forgotten my name.

We of course talked of dear Jackie at once, but when I said it was a shame to disturb his holiday, Lady Arlington said, "Oh yes," as though she did not understand. Then a man who had not been presented to me began to talk to me. He is no longer in his first youth, but very beautiful and gentle like a seigneur in a Pinturicchio, and we discussed Sargent's pictures and art in general. I found him very well-informed, intelligent, and even erudite; he has written a book about *Villon*. Then more people arrived: an old man with a beard, who my "Italian nobleman" whispered to me was Wreathall, the celebrated novelist. He is, between us, a *raseur*, and told stories enough to make one sleep about ghosts in a kitchen. There also arrived two American ladies, one a real American, full of life; the other just like an Englishwoman, and, to speak the truth, one

would not have known she was American except by her clothes; she was dressed well, just like a Frenchwoman.

Then came some sportsmen, some clubmen, and a little man with a *pince-nez*. They all talked together about their friends, calling everybody by their little names; for example, Janie, and Letty, and Tommy, and Bobbie, so all that was Greek to me. Soon everybody disappeared into the garden by twos, and I was left alone with Lady Arlington and my "Italian nobleman!" The pale young man who was there when I arrived gave a glance into the hall and went out again. Lady Arlington told me he was a celebrated M.P., and very remarkable. I continued to discuss art and history, in which he was so strong, with my "Italian nobleman," until at last Lady Arlington said she was sure I would like rest, and she conducted me to my bedroom, a ravishing room furnished with all the English comfort, looking over the superb garden with its admirable lawns.

I was glad to go to my room, so as to have plenty of time to make my toilet, because they had told me the English are so exact. I disembarrass myself of my things and put on a dressing-gown. I lie down, and presently I hear cries from the

garden; I look out of the window and I see in the distance they are playing at croquet with great gaiety. I am almost tempted to go downstairs once more, but as I am already undressed I have not the energy; so I remain in my room and read a book, and at half-past seven my maid comes, so that I was ready almost before half-past eight, the dinner hour. When the dinner gong rang, and I left my room to descend, some of the men were only just coming in from the garden. I was the first downstairs.

There was no one in the salon except the little man with the *pince-nez*. He said nothing at all at first, but after five minutes he said he was glad it had stopped raining, and after that not a word. We did not sit down at table until nine. Sir Arlington gave me the arm, and on the other side was an oldish distinguished man with well cut features, *très bien*, with good manners, but so devoted to his neighbouress that he paid no attention to me. She was a beauty, but dressed, it is inconceivable! *Fagotée, ma chère!* If you could have seen it! It was to cry about! Her dress was made in Paris too, but all put on anyhow.

Sir Arlington is a delicious gentleman, but *distrait*; he cares only for birds and animals,

and often undertakes long expeditions for sport in Africa. I asked him who all the people were, and imagine, he had no idea who was the small man with the *pince-nez*, or several of the others. He said: "Those are my wife's literary friends; they are very nice, but too clever for me." He is modest, like all the Englishmen. Lady Arlington has, it appears, the mania for *hommes de lettres* as well as for music, gardening, and a thousand other things, although, between us, she is *une sotte—bête comme une oie et poseuse!* and always making exaggerated exclamations, such as How thrilling! How darling! and always in ecstasy about nothing. I talked with Sir Arlington nearly all dinner, as my other neighbour was so occupied. There was no general conversation, and we were twenty-two at table.

After dinner, according to the British custom, the ladies went into the drawing-room; they broke up into groups, the young women sat on a sofa and two or three others—the Americans also—grouped themselves round them. The others talked *tête-à-tête*. Lady Arlington sat beside me, with another lady who seemed to be very pleased that I was French, and just as we had begun to talk Lady Arlington left us and joined the group by

the sofa. The lady who remained with me talked of nothing but Paris and French things, and what a salad! Cafés chantants, Réjane, De Bussy, Fursy, and Maeterlinck, and all *à côté!* The men stayed very late, but came out at last, and then Lady Arlington arranged the Bridge. There were four tables; everybody played except the M.P., who sat down and began reading a book; the novelist, who went to bed; the little man with the *pince-nez*, who I discovered was a celebrated painter; my "Italian nobleman," and the political lady. She took the M.P. away from his book, and settled herself down in a corner with him for the rest of the evening.

Lady Arlington took my "Italian nobleman" apart and said something to him in a whisper, and I heard him answer: "I have been talking to her the whole afternoon." Then she went up to the painter and said something to him, and he came and sat down beside me. We talked French literature and theatres; he is intelligent, but twenty years in behind about everything French, and though I was told he was an *homme d'esprit*, I could not understand his allusions nor his pleasantries.

The Bridge went on late; it was already half-past twelve when we went to bed. Lady Arlington

asked me if I would have breakfast in my room, but I, who wanted to see a real English breakfast, decided to descend. I was resolved to make no mistake about my clothes, so I came down the next morning at ten in a dress I had got for the *Mont Dore*, a simple jacket and a short skirt. Imagine my astonishment! Everybody was dressed in muslins, as elegant as possible, *grandes toilettes*. Lady Arlington was dressed in white and silver and green and gold, half *décolletée*, with a huge green hat. I am not wicked, you know, but she looked like a great white parrot with her blonde coiffure! It is only English complexions which can support such toilettes in the morning.

After breakfast Lady Arlington and the M.P. went to the church; she said that afterwards she would show me her "Friendship's Garden," which I suppose is a garden reserved for her intimate friends. The guests went into the garden and sat under the trees in small groups; nearly every one had a book, and I found that wherever I went I made a desert, a *vide*, and everybody said they must go and write letters. After a time I went in doors, also to write letters, and in every drawing room I found a *tête-à-tête!* I waited for Lady

Arlington, but Sir Arlington found me and asked me to take a walk, and he took me to see his stables and the park, which is a dream. I asked about the garden, but he said that was his wife's, and that he did not occupy himself with it; but he showed me all that was practical and interesting. It was admirable. I came in all out of breath before the lunch, and had just time to go upstairs and change my dress.

This time I thought I would be right, and I put on my most elegant Worth dress. But no! I come downstairs, I find everybody sitting at the lunch, and they have once more changed into short skirts and flannels. It was despairing! There was only one empty place left, between the painter and the M.P. I talked French *politique* with him; he was amiable, but I could not see what they find remarkable in him.

After lunch the tennis; it was not very hot, and Lady Arlington and some of the other guests went out, and one of the young women (she who was so pretty) quarrelled with one of the other women, and although everybody tried to calm her, she would not listen and went into the house, crying, my dear, crying hot tears, and there she

remained for the rest of the afternoon! I did not know what the drama was about. Then everybody disappeared; the "Italian nobleman" (always so well meaning and so modest) proposed to me to look on at the tennis. We sat down on chairs with the painter and the novelist until tea was brought.

At tea another man arrived from London, a lord, I forget his name, middle-aged and very gay; he at once got himself presented to me; we played a new game called croquet-golf until dinner. The others did not seem to appreciate him so much, perhaps he shocked the English reserve; he is full of *en-train* and the English humour. At dinner Sir Arlington again gave me the arm. After dinner everybody played Bridge once more, but I had the joy to find my friend the new arrival, who talked to me the whole evening and regaled me with his drollery, and made a thousand farces, causing me to die of laughing, simply (imagine how!) by drawing pigs with his eyes shut!

This morning I returned to London, on which I will write you further impressions soon. I adore England, the men are so well informed and full of humour, the women are beautiful, but why do

not they learn to put on clothes, and why are they so dressed and yet so untidy? Oh how different you are from us!

Your friend,

JEANNE.

A RUSSIAN SAILOR

Letter from a Russian Sailor to his Brother

COWES, *July* 23 (*August* 6), 1909.
(St. Trafim's Day.)

My dear brother Ivan,

I am alive and well, and I hope you are alive and well, and that all the family are thriving, and I beg you to greet my father, my stepmother, my brother Andrew, my sister, little Peter, and all my near ones from me. Please also greet Dimitri Ivanovitch and Paul Borisovitch and Anna Nikolaevna. We arrived yesterday in this country. It belongs to the English, who possess so many countries. Their great Queen is no longer alive, but there is now a King in her place who is a blood relation of our Emperor.

We were sent on shore yesterday to buy provisions. Everything is very cheap, except *vodka*, which costs three roubles a small bottle. But the

English drink a *vodka* of their own which is also very dear, and they drink a kind of beer which we do not care for much. The houses are all built of brick and warmed with coal. Even the working men live in stone houses and heat them with coal. There is no wood anywhere. The houses and the streets are kept clean, and the people, even the gentry, obey the police, and are humble when they are given orders. The English are Christians, and like white men in all respects. They are not heathens. Most of them are rich, and they have many lacqueys who obey their masters like dumb slaves, and dare not look them in the face when they speak to them.

The English food is nasty, and there is little to eat, although all eat meat every day, except the very poor, who seldom receive alms from the passers-by. There are here many beggars in the streets, but nobody gives them food or money. We gave a cripple a quarter of a rouble and he was surprised.

There are many luxurious ships in the harbour all painted white and pretty to look at. At night they are lit up by electricity. The English Fleet is here, too, and it is very big, and the ships are fine, and we were heavy-hearted when we looked

at it and thought of our brave sailors who had been obliged to fight like lions for their dear country. But there is no help for it, and if Providence wills we shall one day have another fleet bigger than the first. The tide is strong here, and dangerous for us who do not know where the rocks are, and when we ask nobody can explain, for the English do not speak Russian at all. I only know three things in English: "Plenty whisky," which means *vodka*; "five o'clock," which means *shabash* (all over); and "alright," which means "I thank you."

The English sailors are like ours, but they have little to eat or drink. The laws are strict here, and if a man who has taken drink walks about in the streets he is put in prison. If that happened in Russia we should mutiny. Moreover, it is forbidden to smoke almost everywhere. This is strange, as the English smoke a great deal; but they are an obedient people, and clean. They respect their laws.

On shore it is merry. There are many clowns and acrobats dancing and singing, just as though it were a fair. But the English do not know how to sing, and they do not dance at all. Although there is much merrymaking I have not seen one

drunken man, so much afraid are they of being put in prison.

The English have a Duma, but an Englishman who speaks Russian told us that it was just like ours, and that they did nothing but talk there. He also told us that the English women had mutinied because so many of them had been put in prison for beating the police, and that they were being starved in the prisons until they should submit. This seems to us cruel, but the English are often not kind to women and animals, and they say the women interfere in what is not their business, just as they do at home.

The English have no army, only mercenaries who are paid money. Some of them are niggers. I asked the man who talked Russian why it was that if men were paid so much to be soldiers every one was not a soldier. He said that soldiers were sent away to foreign climates, and that men did not respect soldiers in England. It is also like that in China. The sailors are much respected and much loved, and they are all Englishmen, and white men, and not mercenaries. They are merry people, too.

The English naval officers are clean shaven, which makes them look very funny, but they are good officers and know their business. The police

are dressed in long great-coats and carry no weapons, because the English people are docile and submissive; and they have few hooligans here, although they say that in London there are many hooligans, but these are hanged.

Yesterday we went to Portsmouth, a town, for we could not buy what we wanted in this place, which is only a village, although all the houses are built of stone. Portsmouth is a beautiful town, with many shops, palaces, theatres, and churches, and full of beautiful women who are all married to sailors. It is the custom of the place to obey the sailors in everything, and not to rob them. The English sailors are rich, much richer than some of our generals. They spend their money generously and treat everybody. They would be robbed in Russia, but here everybody lives in terror of the police, and I am told that if a poor man is arrested there is no chance of his not being condemned to prison. They are strict, so they say, in their prisons, and the "unfortunates" are not allowed even to speak to each other or to smoke. Fancy this happening in Russia! If they are very bad they are sent to America! But this only happens to the very bad criminals.

The English are polite to strangers, but un-

civil among themselves. They never greet each other, and even the naval officers never shake hands with each other. When I first heard this I did not believe it, as I thought only Turks behaved like that, but it is true, and they do not seem to mind. The gentry live quite apart from the common people, but the common people do not mind, and, indeed, they laugh at them openly, and call them, so I was told, fools to their faces, and abuse them and their mothers openly and without fear of any unpleasantness. All this is because they obey and respect the law, and it 's very well, but we could not live in a country like this, because it would sadden us.

Everything is in order here except the railways. There the disorder is terrible. You buy no ticket for your seat, and you cannot register your luggage. But the guards are strict and never let even a poor man travel without a ticket! That would be a bad business for you, Ivan, who never take a ticket. They tell me it is impossible to make any arrangement with the railway guards because the Government is powerful and they are afraid of being put in prison.

I only travelled a short distance, but it was difficult to get a seat in the train. And if I had had

any luggage it would certainly have been stolen, as they will not allow you to take much luggage in the carriage with you. The trains are bad. Their first class is more uncomfortable than our third class, because there is no room to lie down. You can get tea everywhere; but the English do not know how to make tea. It is thick and black and bitter, like soup which has been kept too long. They do not know how to make bread, and there is no black bread. Their white bread is made of starch and is not fit to eat. But since every one eats meat this does not matter.

I cannot write any more. I am glad to have travelled in foreign countries, and this is a clean country and the people are friendly and all right; but I shall be glad to get back to my native land, for which my heart is weary, and to a place where a man can do as he pleases. We always heard much of English freedom, but a man in prison in our country is freer than a man at large here. I send you a dozen postcards which are very beautiful. They did not cost much money.

Please greet my father, my stepmother, my brother, my sister, little Peter, and all who are near to me, as well as Dimitri Ivanovitch and Paul Borisovitch. Please heaven, I shall return home

soon. To-day the English King and those who are near to him will pay a visit to his Majesty the Emperor (God bless him!) and his near ones, and they will drink tea together. To-night we shall eat and drink to their health, and if heaven pleases I shall have drink taken. Heaven bless you and all. I am, my dear brother Ivan, your affectionate brother,

BASIL.

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